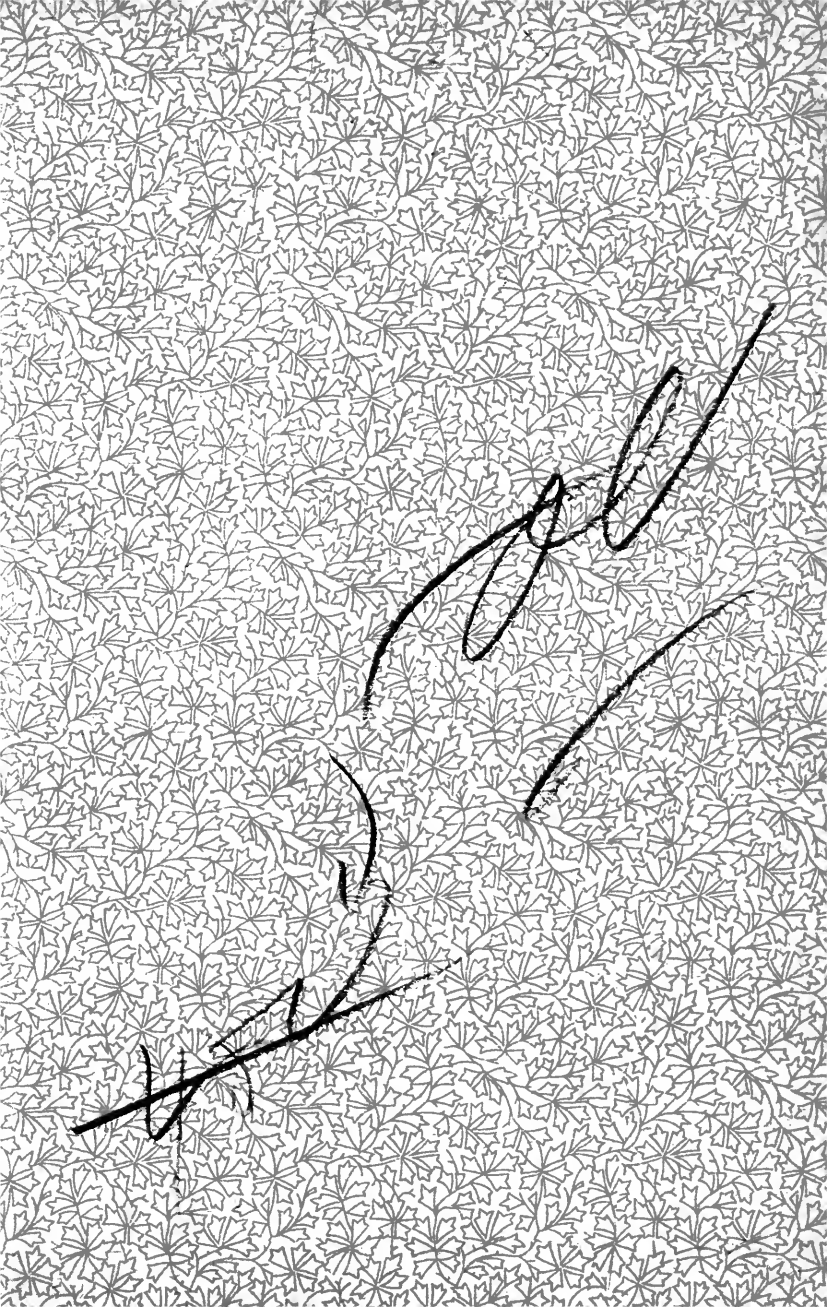


CHATTANOOGA



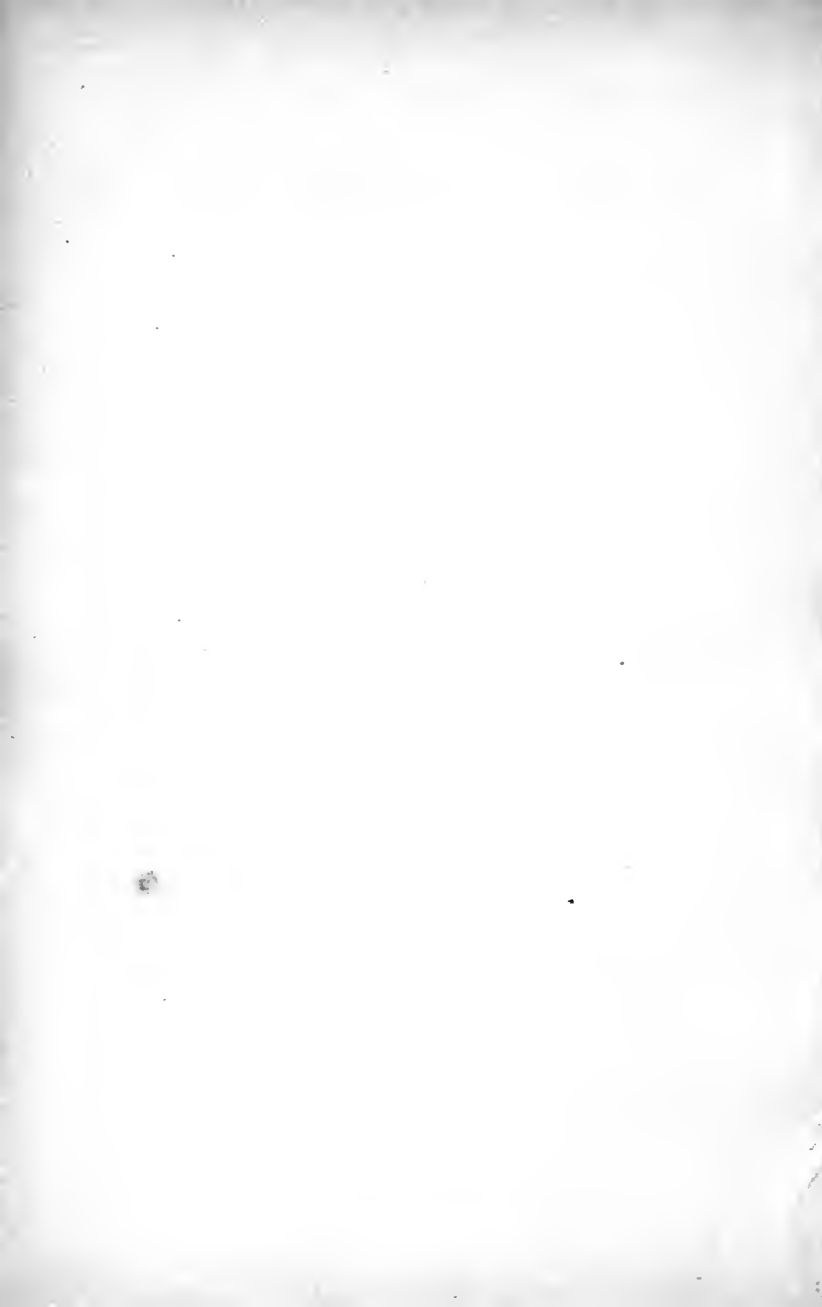
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CHATTANOOGA



CHATTANOOGA

A ROMANCE

OF THE

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

BY

F. A. MITCHEL

LATE U. S. A.

THIRD EDITION

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THE SCENE OF THE STORY.

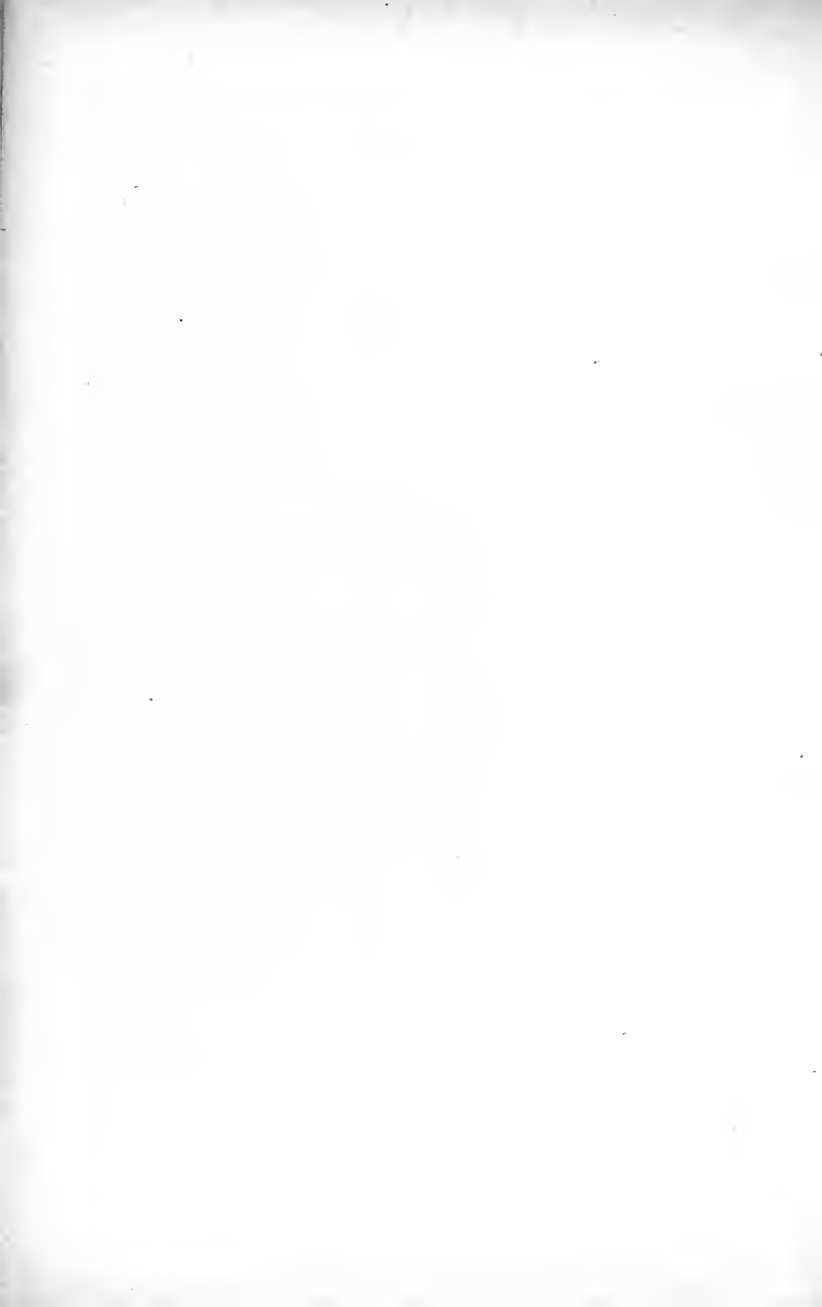
WHAT more inviting spot to the romancer of the Civil War than Chattanooga? At least it is so to me. When scarcely out of my "teens," an aide-de-camp on the staff of my father, the late General O. M. Mitchel, then operating in North Alabama, it had all the fascination of an objective point, a place beyond the lines whence came vague rumors and wherein lay that unknown force, the enemy.

I well remember once looking down from a mountain plateau toward Chattanooga and wondering what was going on there. I did not think that thirty years later the incident would suggest an opening for a story. Then some of the great events of the war occurred there. Armies left Chattanooga to march on great campaigns, or fought battles "in the clouds" on her heights.

While the story is purely one of love and adventure, the dates, topography, location and movements of troops referred to are given correctly.

F. A. M.

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CHATTANOOGA.

I.

NO MAN'S LAND.

IT was the 20th of August, 1862. Corinth had been evacuated more than two months before. The Army of the Ohio had moved eastward into northern Alabama. The President and eminent Union generals were anxious as to east Tennessee, where, it was rumored, the Confederates were preparing for some new move.

High in the Cumberland Mountains a soldier in the blue and yellow uniform of a private of cavalry sat on his horse, looking down on the valleys of the Sequatchie and the Tennessee. A carbine was slung over his shoulder, a Colt's revolver was at his hip. He was long, and lithe, and graceful. About him was an air of refinement seldom found under a private's uniform, except during that war which called out men from all classes, both in the North and in the South. His hair was light,

his blue eye was restless, and denoted its possessor to be a man of great mental and physical activity. While there was something statuesque in the appearance of the man and horse, they presented a marked contrast, accoutered as they were for war, with the peaceful scenes before them and about them. Not a sound was to be heard up there in the mountains, except such as came from the insects or the birds. The equestrian figure, mounted on its lofty pedestal, was the personification of war in solitude.

As the soldier gazed down upon the expansive view, different expressions flitted across his face. At one moment there was a serious look, such as men wear on the eve of battle; at another a shrinking expression; then a dreamy one. He saw territory that lay beyond the Union lines. He wondered what warlike scenes were hidden down there within the blending of rocks, and rivers, and undulations, lying calm and sweet before him that summer afternoon. Were clusters of white tents there? Were brigades, divisions, army corps, marching? Now he thought he could hear a distant creaking of caissons and gun carriages. But he knew this could not be. If they were there, they were too far to be heard. The sounds never became real. The young man's fancies

were always broken by the actual rustle of the leaves or some sound from the furred or feathered inhabitants of the mountains.

Then a scene he had passed through the previous evening came up before him.

He stood in the presence of a general of division,—the finest specimen of physical splendor of all the generals of the Union army,—one who was a year later to achieve the title of “the Rock of Chickamauga.” The general was speaking, while his subordinate was listening respectfully and attentively.

“I am ordered by the Department Commander to find out what is going on at Chattanooga. Our reconnoitering parties have thus far brought us nothing save that there is no enemy very near. We are liable to be flanked and cut off from east Tennessee. See here!” He turned to a map spread out on a pine table. “Here is Chattanooga; here the Sequatchie Valley; up here to the north is Knoxville, held by General Kirby Smith for the Confederates. Here is Cumberland Gap. If the enemy is concentrating at Chattanooga he may not only hold it against a greatly superior force, but can march right along here,”—he traced the route with his finger,—“form a junction with General Smith at Knoxville, and into Kentucky. Louisville and

Cincinnati will be in danger. Forrest and Morgan are hammering at our communications; we get reports of immense forces of the enemy at Knoxville; everything points to this or some similar plan of campaign on the part of the Confederates. If so, they must be concentrating at Chattanooga as a point of rendezvous."

The General paused; then looking the soldier in the eye said impressively:

"You are the only man to whom I can intrust so important a mission. I can't order you, as you know, beyond our lines, except in uniform. Go as far as you dare as a soldier; I leave the rest to you. Will you undertake to bring me the information we require?"

"I will, General."

"Very well. The fate of this army, the success of the Union arms in the West, perhaps the prolongation of the war, depend upon you."

The young man bowed, but said nothing.

"You will need a pass to get beyond our pickets." The general drew a camp chair beside a pine table and took up a pen. "How will you have it written?"

"'Pass Private Mark Malone'—that name will do as well as any—'beyond our lines at will.'"

The general wrote the pass, and handing it to Private Malone, "Go, and God bless you!"

he said. He took his emissary's hand and pressed it heartily.

As the words, "Go, and God bless you," rang again in memory, the soldier touched the flanks of his horse lightly with his great brass spurs, and began to descend the mountain.

An hour later he entered the little town of Jasper. Riding up to the tavern he reined in his horse and let him drink at the rough wooden trough in front. A number of country people were sitting on the veranda, and every one fixed his eyes on the soldier who sat on his horse looking about him with as much apparent indifference as if he were within the Union lines. When the animal had drunk his fill his rider cast the reins to a negro and dismounted. Then detaching his carbine from where he had hooked it to his saddle, he took it in his hand and tramped into the house to the jingle of his spurs.

Not a word was spoken by those watching, in admiration, the strapping young fellow with so young a face set on so stalwart a frame. He paid no attention to them, but walked into the dining-room and called for supper. After devoting himself to a plate of bacon and corn bread, with a cup of chicory in lieu of coffee (for the blockade of the Southern ports had stopped the flow of the coffee bean from foreign countries), he walked out on the gallery,

and, seating himself on a wooden bench, took a briarwood pipe and a tobacco pouch out of his pocket and began to smoke.

Jasper was "no man's land." The people living there and thereabout were nearly all Confederate sympathizers, but had learned to look for Union or Confederate troops with an equal chance of either. From the moment of the soldier's arrival they had discussed his coming in whispers. Soldiers of either side usually came in numbers. It was seldom that a single trooper had the hardihood to enter the town of Jasper alone, especially one wearing the blue. Presently an old man, dressed in "butter-nut," got up from his seat among the loungers and approached the stranger for the purpose of reconnoiter:

"Reckon y' come from Decherd, Yank?"

"Thereabout."

"Over the mountains?"

"Yes."

"You uns got many sojers over thar?"

"Where?"

"At Sparty."

"No."

"Murfreesboro'?"

"I don't know."

"Reckon thar's a powerful sight at McMinnville?"

"A division, perhaps."

The man paused a moment and then went on:

"Thet's an all fired peart rifle o' yourn. Wouldn't mind letten me handle it, would yer?"

Mark cocked the piece, took off the cap, and handed it to his interrogator. He still had his revolver, while the man had a weapon which could not be fired without a percussion cap.

"Wal now, thet's quar."

The man looked from the rifle to the soldier, not knowing which to admire most, the mechanism of the former or the coolness of the latter. Then he handed it back.

"*You* ain't no Yank."

"Why not?"

"Yanks don't come down hyar all alone. Besides a Yankee sojer wouldn't ride a blooded mar like that-a-one. Morgan's men rides them kind o' critters and wears them uniforms sometimes."

Mark smiled knowingly.

"You think I'm one of Colonel Morgan's men, do you?"

"Reckon yer one o' ourn, anyway."

And the man walked away, well satisfied with his penetration.

The soldier got up, went into the tavern and paid for his supper with one of the postal shin-plasters used at the time in lieu of silver;

then he came out and called for his horse. While waiting he stood leaning against a post of the gallery, maintaining the same easy confidence that had characterized him since his arrival. Presently a negro came around from the barn, leading the slender-legged mare, and the soldier, sauntering up to her leisurely, stroked her neck ; then mounting, without once looking at his observers, he rode away.

But Private Malone's confidence was all assumed. He did not start on the road he designed to follow ; he trotted off up the valley intending later to find a path or a cross road which would take him southward to the Chattanooga pike. He suspected that the group he was leaving would not suffer him to ride that night in safety, and he did not care to let them know his true route.

Mark trotted on up the road while the daylight was fading. He was musing upon the difficult, the hazardous task before him. The road was deserted except by himself ; the evening was still, and his horse's hoofs beat loud on the stones beneath him. When he was riding in the open, he felt comparatively confident ; but upon entering a thicket he would uneasily reach down and put his hand upon his rifle. He knew the bushwhacker of the period, and fancied that a rifle or a shotgun lurked behind

every tree. Amid the peaceful quiet of a summer evening in the country, it was strange that one should look for death; none but a practiced scout would have been thus on the alert.

The twilight was nearly faded. Mark had gone about three miles from the tavern, when nearing a fork in the road he heard:

"Halt, thar!"

Instinctively his hand went to the handle of his revolver, for the sound was near enough to indicate that a pistol rather than a rifle might be needed.

"Air you uns the sojer ez tuk supper at the tavern at Jasper?" asked a voice, singularly soft for a bushwhacker.

"Well, suppose I am!"

"I know y' from yer voice."

"How's that?" asked the soldier, puzzled.

"Kind o' deep and smooth like. Y' mought as wall put up yer shooten iron. I got a bead on y'."

Mark could see no one, but, judging from the voice of the speaker, his alarm partially subsided.

"I reckoned y' mought come along hyar, so I jist squatted and waited."

"Well, what do you want with me?"

"I'm one o' the Slacks. We're Union, we Slacks air. They're goen to drive us out soon, I reckon."

“ Union, eh? What are you—man, woman boy, or girl?”

“I’m a gal.”

“The Dickens. What are you stopping me for at the muzzle of a gun?”

“Lordy! How’d I know y’? Y’ mought a ben a bushwhacker. I war at the tavern whar y’ tuk sopper. The landlord’s wife, she’s my aunt. I sor y’ come in and hearn y’ talken to old Venables. They reckoned y’ war Confederate till y’ paid in Yankee shinplasters; then they reckoned y’ mought be Yankee after all.”

Mark began to be interested. It was now evident to him that this being, ensconsed behind a snake fence, holding him under cover of a gun, was a friend instead of an enemy.

“Well?”

“I kem out hyar to tell y’ ’bout it.”

“Then let me see you as well as hear you.”

A figure with a gun climbed over the fence and advanced toward the soldier. When it came near enough Mark saw a girl who might be anywhere between sixteen and eighteen, for her skirt only reached to the tops of her shoes, and her hair was cut square around her neck. She came very near to him and spoke in a low tone:

“After y’ left the tavern some on ’em ’lowed

y' was Union, and some on 'em 'lowed y' was Confederate; least-a-ways, they wasn't sartin. Uncle, he's bad secesh, and he 'lowed y' was Union and bound on some errant fur the Yankees. So he perswaded several on 'em ter mount 'n follow y'. They was gitten ready, and I slipped out to the barn and tuk my pony, what I rode over on this afternoon, 'n Jakey's squirrel gun (Jakey's my brother), what I allus carries when I ride round in these hyar war times, 'n I makes tracks cross country by a trail I allus goes to uncle's, 'n comes hum agin, while the men air comen by the road. I jist rode Sally Maria among the trees thar and tied her and squatted behind the fence till y' come along and—Lordy sakes!”

“What's the matter now?”

“Listen!”

They were both quiet for a moment, the girl's two big black eyes denoting her anxiety. They could distinctly hear the tread of horses coming on a brisk lope.

Without a word the girl seized Mark's bridle rein and led horse and rider off the road into the wood. At a short distance behind a rise in the ground, she stopped. Mark was inclined to go on further.

“No, no,” she said hurriedly. “My pony's right thar. If she ketches sight o' your horse she'll whinny.”

Mark dismounted, and the girl, plucking a handful of grass, held it to his horse's mouth to keep his attention from other matters that he might not neigh and betray them. The two stood looking at each other, while the sounds grew louder, dreading every moment that either one of their horses might give the signal that would lead to their discovery. There were evidently not less than half a dozen of the horsemen on the road; altogether too many for one man, even if well armed, to meet.

The men rode up to the fork of the road, where they reined in their horses for a parley. It was a question, doubtless, which road the Yankee soldier had taken. Presently they divided, one party taking the left hand road to Tracy City, the other the road leading up the valley.

As soon as they were gone, Mark took the girl's hand and gave it a grateful pressure:

"God bless you, my girl; you've saved me from capture or being shot in the back—shot, I expect."

The girl shuddered. She knew well enough the fate he would have met if his pursuers had overtaken him. They would have come upon him warily and shot him from behind a tree. When the sounds from the retreating horsemen had died away in the distance, she said:

"Come!"

II.

A CHANGE OF UNIFORM.

THE soldier followed her, leading his horse, till they came upon her own pony tied to a sapling. Mark offered to help her mount, but she was not used to such civility, and leading her horse to the trunk of a fallen tree, mounted by herself.

Crossing the road the two entered a wood on the other side. The girl kept a straight course till she came to a creek which she forded below and near a log that had been felled across it to be used for a foot bridge. On the further side she struck an old road, abandoned, at least, for wheels. Mark rode up alongside of her. She was a wild-looking thing, with hardly a trace of civilization about her except her calico dress and cowhide shoes.

"Where are you taking me to?" asked Mark.

"Hum."

"Where's home?"

"Tother side o' th' Sequatchie River."

"How far is it to the river?"

"'Bout a mile from the creek we just crossed."

"And how far from the river to your home?"

"'Bout another mile. We live on a road ez runs from the Chattenooogy pike to Anderson."

"That's well. I want to reach the pike."

"Wal, y'll only hev ter go a couple o' mile from our house t' git thar."

"You seem to know all about this country."

"Reckon I do. I was born hyar. I done a heap o' hunten in these hyar woods. I toted a gun all over 'em."

"Tell me something about yourself. What's your name?"

"Souri."

"Souri what?"

"Slack."

"Oh yes! You're one of the Slacks, you told me. Isn't Souri a singular name for a girl?"

"Wal, dad he kem from Missouri. So that's what he named me."

"Have you a mother?"

"Yas."

"Brothers and sisters?"

"Henery and Jakey."

"How old are they?"

"Henery, he's 'bout twenty-two. He's in Jim Brown's company o' east Tennessee Cavalry?"

"What? Union cavalry?"

"Yas."

"You mean regiment, not company. I know Brown well. How old is your other brother?"

"Jakey? he's thirteen."

"At home?"

"Yas."

"What are you going to do with me when you get me to your home?"

"Take y' to the barn, I reckon."

"Why not to the house? Aren't your folks all right? I thought you said they were Union."

"Oh, they're all Union. But mebbe they mought suspect at the tavern (seein I'm gone 'thout sayen good-by and knowen I'm Union), that I've put y' up to somepen or tuk y' hum."

"Souri," said Mark meditatively, "do you know that since I met you I have been——"

"Doin' a job o' thinkin'?"

"You've hit it exactly."

"What about?"

"I've been thinking that you're nobody's fool."

The girl laughed, or rather chuckled. She enjoyed the compliment and was too unsophisticated to pretend that she did not.

They soon struck a dirt road leading directly south, which they followed till they came to the Sequatchie River, striking a ford at the same time. Souri led the way into the ford, Mark following. Her pony was used to such crossings, this one in particular, while Mark's horse preferred to feel his way slowly; consequently Souri reached the opposite bank before Mark had got half way over.

It was now night, but it was clear, and a half moon cast its faint light upon the land and the river. Mark suddenly looked up from the water, and saw Souri on the bank watching him. Had he been near enough he would have seen anxiety depicted on every feature of her face.

"Keep up the stream!" she called, pointing at the same time.

He turned his horse's head as she directed, but soon, lowering his eyes to the water, began to go down stream again.

"Look at me"; she called, "don't look at the water. It's runnen makes it seem sif y' war goen straight when yer goen crooked. Thur's a ledge o' rocks below thar and deep water beyond."

Mark fixed his eyes on his guide, and turning his horse's head toward her, urged her forward. She picked her way slowly, as if conscious of danger, and at last, coming to the brink, stepped quickly out of the water and shook herself.

"What makes you tremble so?" he asked of Souri.

"I ain't," she said, coloring.

"Is that a dangerous ford?"

"Ef you'd a tumbled offen the ledge y'd a drowned."

"I've done some scouting before this, but I see now that I haven't learned to cross a current till to-day. Next time I'll look out for something on shore to steer by."

Another ten minutes brought them home. They came upon the house from its rear. It fronted on the road running northward, and faced east. Souri led the way to a rickety barn, where both horses were stabled. She left Mark in the barn while she went into the house to inform the inmates of his presence.

Presently she came out.

"Dad lows y' mought come in fur a spell 'thout much resk. They won't know o' y'r bein' hyar yet a while. Least-a-ways thar's no hurry. But dad reckons y' mought sleep in the barn with one eye open."

"I shall not sleep anywhere to-night. I must go on. But I'll go in with you for a while."

A man met them at the door with white, shocky hair and a stubble beard. He looked sixty, though he was ten or fifteen years younger. He walked as if he were following the plow. His trousers were drawn nearly up to his arm-pits, a double-breasted waistcoat served in lieu of a coat, and an old woolen hat covered his head to the back of his neck.

"Them blue clothes looks kinder peart to we uns down hyar, ez ain't seen nothen but gray," said the man. "I 'lowed when you uns went up ter Chattanooga last June and fired them big guns at the town yer was agoin' to hold onto these hyar parts."

"Perhaps it was a mistake," said Mark, "but I never criticise the acts of my superiors."

"Come inter th' house."

The dwelling was composed of two square log houses, some ten feet apart, under one roof, with a floor between the two. The man led Mark into one of these parts or houses. The articles in it that struck the soldier's eye were: a very high bedstead, heightened further by a feather bed; a chest of drawers, and a clock on the mantle, that ticked loud enough to be heard out in the barn. There were some

pieces of rag carpet on the floor, two or three hard-seated chairs, and a rocker.

"What yer got fur supper?" the old man asked as his wife entered.

"I don't want any supper," said the soldier.
"I only ate an hour or two ago."

The woman, who was bent down through some nervous disease, went to the chest of drawers, took therefrom a cob pipe and some tobacco, and began to smoke.

"Much shaken among the sojers, stranger?" she asked.

"At the beginning of a fight there's a good deal," replied Mark; "but after they're once in, they get on without much trouble."

"Don't mean that kind o' shaken; ager."

"Oh, ague. No, I don't think there's much ague."

"Fever?"

"There's always more or less camp fever. It seems as if every man who campaigns in this country must have a dose of typhoid to get acclimated."

"Thur's a powerful lot o' fevers 'bout hyar. Thur's the typhoid, the broken bone, the intermitten, and the remitten, and onct en a while we git yaller Jack when it comes up the Mississippi from Orleans."

"That's a good deal of fever," replied Mark;

"but, to come down to business, I want to say a few words to you people. You're sure you're Union?"

"Sartin," said the old man.

"Got a young'un in Jim Brown's company of east *Tennesseans*," said the old woman. "I hearn th' all hed the measles in th' spring. Henery hed it."

"Yes, that regiment was nearly all down at one time. Now, I'm going on a very dangerous mission. May I rely on—who are you?"

A boy about thirteen years of age had come into the room, and squaring himself before Mark began to stare at him.

"Jake," replied the intruder.

"I have something of importance to say to your father and mother." Then turning to the parents, "Won't you please send him out?"

"Jes's y' like stranger," answered the father, "but mebbe Jake mought show y' th' way or somep'n. He's purty peart."

Jake's appearance did not bear witness to the encomium.

"Well, let him stay. I would like to rely on this house as a place of refuge in case I have to get back here rapidly. I want you to take care of my horse, and if I never come you can keep him. If I do come, I'll pay you more lib-

erally for horse fodder than you ever were paid before."

"You talk purty rich fer a common sojer."

"Don't fear for that. I have money," and Mark showed a roll of bills that astonished his host.

"Do you agree?"

"Sarten, but the money don't make no differ. I'm a Union man to the backbone."

"Have you any citizen's clothes?"

"Thur's Henery's store clothes, ez he left when he went to jine th' army."

"Will they fit me?"

"Reckon so. Henery's 'bout your size."

Slack took the soldier into the twin log cabin and there gave him a suit of clothes which were intended for best wear, but they had evidently been so intended for years, with frequent deviations from the intention. Mark took off his uniform which, with his rifle and pistol and other accouterments he put under the bed. Then he drew off his boots (so loose that he could easily remove them without unbuckling his spurs), and put on a pairof shoes. A felt hat completed his attire.

"La sakes!" said Souri, raising her hands as she met him passing between the cabins, thus arrayed for secret service.

As Mark entered the room where he had

left Mrs. Slack and Jakey, their eyes stood out wonderingly. Jakey's admiration for the soldier in uniform had been great, but one who could suddenly transform himself was an object of curiosity. Mr. Slack followed Mark into the room.

"Now, how about the road?" asked Mark.

"Whar?"

"To Chattanooga."

"Wal, y' mought go right up the road in front 'n the house fur 'bout a mile. Then y'll come ter a road leadin' sort o' southeast like. Ef y' go down this ar road it'll take y' ter th' Chattennoogy pike. Jakey, you mought go along 'n show 'm th' way."

"Do you know the road your father speaks of, leading to the Chattanooga pike?" asked Mark of the boy.

"Does I know Souri?"

"None o' them side-a-ways talken, Jake. Answer straight," said Mr. Slack severely.

"Recken I does. I knows all th' roads 'bout hyar."

Mark looked at the boy and thought a few moments without speaking. He was a stupid-looking child, but Mark thought that if he could get him to go with him it might avert suspicion. Were he brighter he might be of use, perhaps. At any rate, he would doubtless serve some purpose.

"Jakey," he asked, "how would you like to go with me on—a trip?"

"How would I like to shoot squirrels?"

"*You* Jake! Didn't I tell yer t' answer straight?" from the father.

"Yas, I'd like ter go."

"I've a mind to take you, if your father will let you go," said Mark meditatively.

"Many fevers 'bout Chattenoozy?" asked the mother, taking her pipe out of her mouth and casting an anxious glance at her son.

"What yer goen ter do with him?" asked Slack.

"I only want him for a companion—to divert suspicion—and—well I can't tell exactly what, for an emergency,—perhaps."

"What's a 'mergency?" asked Jakey.

"Well, if I should learn something of importance, I might want to send you back with the news; or if I should be caught in a—in a——"

"Tree, like a coon, with a gun or a dorg below," supplied Jakey.

"That's it exactly. I might want to send word about that."

"I'm afeard he's too little ter be of any use that-a-way," said the father.

"Oh, Jakey can't go. He's got ter stay right hyar 'n do hoen'," chimed his mother.

"What do *you* say, Jakey? Do you want to go?" asked Mark.

"Would I——?"

"You Jake!" again shouted his father.

"Course I want ter go."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will let him go I'll bring him or send him back safely, and leave a twenty dollar greenback here with you for him on his return."

"Souri! Souri!" called Slack.

Souri came in so quickly as to argue that she had not been out of hearing of all that had passed.

"Snack fur these two uns," said her father.

Souri departed, and presently returned with a bundle containing cold eatables.

"Now, Jakey," said his father, as they all stood at the front gate before the departure of the two travelers, "remember yer a Unioner, 'n treat the stranger far."

"Oh, I ain' no slouch 'f I am little," replied the boy, with a shrug and a scowl, indicating that he regarded the injunction entirely uncalled for.

"'N Jakey," called his mother, "don't yer go en sleep out nights 'n git th' ager."

"Never yer mind, maw. I ain't go'n ter git no ager."

The two started off up the road. The air

was pleasant, and it was not too warm for tramping. They passed out of the clearing and were about entering the wood into which the road took them when they heard a step behind them. Turning, there was Souri.

"How long d' y' 'low y' mought be gone down thar?" she asked.

Mark looked into her face and she lowered her eyes.

"Why do you want to know, Souri?"

"Wal, maw, she'll worrit 'bout Jakey."

"I can't tell you."

"How fur y' goen?"

"To Chattanooga. Perhaps further, but not likely."

"What'll th' do t' y' ef they ketch y'?"

"They'll probably lift me off my feet with a hemp cord."

"They won't, will they? Don't talk that-away."

She looked at him with her black eyes and shivered.

"I guess I can get through all right," said Mark reassuringly. "I've done it before."

The girl stood for a few moments irresolute. Then she drew a red silk handkerchief from her bosom and handed it to Mark. It was the only bit of finery she possessed.

"What is that for, Souri?" asked Mark, affected in spite of himself.

"Wal, ef I don't see y' no more, y' mought keep et ter—ter——. Mebbe ef y' git inter trouble y' mought find a chance ter send it ter me—Jakey mought tote it—'n I'll go down 'n —'n——" She turned away. It was evident she could not clearly express her meaning, and her voice was getting husky.

"Good-by, my little girl," said Mark, going up to her and taking her hand. "I have a notion that if it is necessary to the Union cause for my life to be saved again, you will be on hand to save it."

Then the girl went back to the house and the travelers went on their way.

"Jakey," asked Mark, "can your sister read writing?"

"Reckon not."

"Can you?"

"Can I sing like a bird?"

"Do you mean that you can or you can't?"

"I can't."

"Well, your sister is a good girl, and a smart girl, and a courageous girl. She has saved me once, and if I get into trouble I would rather have her near by than a sergeant and ten men."

"Reckon she giv y' th' hanshicuf ter send instead o' writen."

Mark looked down into the stupid face of the boy beside him. He began to think that the child's stupidity was not flattering to himself, inasmuch as Jakey had penetrated farther than he had into Souri's design, and her diffidence as to confessing her ignorance.

"I hope there'll be no necessity for that, Jakey. But we must arrange what we shall pass for in Dixie. Now do you know what *you* are?"

"*Do I?*"

"Yes, *do* you?"

"I'm y'r little brother."

"Exactly; and what are we going to Chattanooga for? What shall we tell 'em?"

"Goen ter buy caliker fur maw 'n Souri, 'n galluses fur paw, 'n terbacker fur you uns, 'n a *squirrel gun fur me!*"

When he came to the squirrel gun his little eyes glistened under the rim of his hat.

"By George!" exclaimed Mark laughing, "you ought to be 'Old Pap's' chief scout instead of me."

"'S that what y' air?"

"I am, just now."

"Golly!"

III.

A CONFEDERATE HOUSEHOLD.

MARK and Jakey trudged on. They met no one on the way, but at one part of the road, running through a thick wood, they saw a light in the distance to the right in the thickest part. They halted for a moment and then advanced cautiously. Coming to a place where they could get a view of what the light revealed, they saw several men in "butternut," whose horses were picketed near by, lying around the embers of a fire.

"Guerrillas," quoth Mark.

Not caring to disturb these villains, who had no more respect for Confederates than Unionists, they passed on stealthily.

About midnight they came to a rivulet, and Mark concluded to bivouac there. They turned in among the trees beside the road.

"Jakey," said Mark, "before we go a step farther or do anything, in fact, we must fix this money."

He pulled his roll of bills from his pocket.

"Take off your boot," he said.

Jakey pulled off his boot and handed it to his companion. Mark took a number of bills, and ripping out the lining of the boot put it back in its place with the bills under it. Smoothing it down, he handed the boot back to Jakey, and told him to put it on again.

They took a bite of the snack Souri had prepared for them and a drink from the rivulet. Then they laid down, resting their heads against the root of a tree. It was not long before Jakey was asleep, and Mark drew his head over toward himself and laid it against his own breast. Thus the two rested. Mark slept at intervals; Jakey, with all the soundness of healthy, irresponsible boyhood.

The moon was setting, and Mark caught a glimpse of it between the lower branches of the trees and the horizon. When he cast his eyes upward he saw the stars. He fell to musing upon his singular position. He remembered that far to the north of him Confederate cavalymen were dashing hither and thither, attacking bridges, capturing the guards, threatening Union pickets, and in every way harassing the army of the Ohio. Yet here he was beyond the Union front, in a region which belonged to no one save the outlaw guerillas—ruled neither by the United States nor the Confederacy—with all silent and peaceful about

him. An innocent face, careless of danger, lay on his breast. The leaves of the trees hung listlessly above him.

Then that blue vault above! Its serenity seemed to mock the puny contests upon a world which, with all its campaigns and battles, was but a grain of sand among the heavenly hosts. Its heaviest artillery could not be heard at the nearest planet. Its marshaled armies could not be seen. Save for the reflected light of the sun it would revolve in space, unknown by those on even the nearest planets. And so musing he fell asleep.

At the first sign of dawn Mark waked Jakey, and after they had both thrown the refreshing water of the rivulet over their heads they started in search of a house at which they designed to "happen in" at breakfast time. Fortunately they soon found such a place. Turning into the gate at the first farm-house, a farmer's wife received them kindly, and gave them what for that time and country was a palatable meal.

Refreshed by their breakfast they walked on. Various people—countrymen, negroes, Confederate soldiers, and occasionally a squadron of cavalry—passed them on the road, but they were not questioned or interfered with by any one. Occasionally they would ask the

road, but upon receiving the necessary information, and after making a few commonplace remarks, would go on. At noon they turned aside from the pike in among the trees and ate what was left of their snack.

About sunset they reached a large place set back off to the left of the road. The premises were more imposing than any they had yet passed, and they judged by it that they were in the environs of Chattanooga. The house was a large, square, old-fashioned building, with a very high basement. It had two stories, with a peak roof in which were dormer windows. A gallery or veranda extended across the front both above and below. Some large trees were scattered about the yard. In the rear were the negro quarters and the barn.

Mark determined to ask for food and shelter for the night here. Turning into the gate, he followed a straight road leading for perhaps a hundred yards to the house. A young girl robed in a white muslin dress, of a very simple pattern, and a pink sash, stood on the veranda watching them as they came on. When they reached the steps leading up to where she stood, Mark saw a pair of black eyes looking at him, which, conscious of the deception he was about to practice, seemed to read him through and through. Indeed he was suffi-

ciently confused to take off his hat to the girl with all the grace and manner of a polished gentleman.

"If you please, ma'm," he said, assuming the dialect of a countryman, "me 'n my leetle brother's goen ter Chattennoogy. My brother he's walked a right smart show fur sech a younker. Could y' give us some supper and a place ter sleep all night?"

"You can come up here and sit down, and I'll see."

"What a musical voice," thought Mark.

The travelers went up on to the veranda and sat on some wooden benches ranged along the rail.

"Have you come far?" asked the girl, who regarded them with evident curiosity.

"From our leetle farm on the Sequatchie."

"Your brother does look tired. Are you hungry, little boy?"

"Is it a gitten dark?"

"Why, yes," she said surprised. "What has that to do with it?"

"I'm hungry jist as sartin," and Jakey's little eyes glistened at the thought of a hot supper.

The young lady laughed and went into the house.

"Mamma, there's a young countryman and

his little brother out on the gallery; they want some supper and a bed for the night."

An elderly lady, with two white puff curls on either side of her face, looked up from a book she was reading. Her appearance was dignified and refined.

"The young man looks quite like a gentleman, if he *is* a countryman," added the daughter.

"We must be very cautious, Laura; you know how we are situated; your father and brother away, and no man in the house; we can't let strangers sleep here. But they may have something to eat and perhaps it might do to let them sleep in the barn if they look right."

"Where shall they have their supper?"

"Have it put on the hall table downstairs."

The daughter paused a moment and thought.

"Do you know, mamma, I can't exactly feel satisfied to put the elder brother in a place given up to the servants."

"What nonsense, Laura! We are taking a great risk to let them into the house at all. Heaven grant that the horses are not all taken before morning. The man may be in league with a band of guerrillas, for all we know."

The daughter withdrew, for the moment quite impressed with her mother's prudence. As she stepped out on the veranda, Mark rose

respectfully, and stood looking into her black eyes with his blue ones. Her mother's caution fled away before that honest countenance.

"You can have some supper," she said, "if you care to eat in the lower hall; and you can sleep—you—you can sleep——"

Mark was bowing his thanks.

"Would you mind sleeping in——?" she paused again.

"The barn? Certainly not."

"You know these are troublous times," she said apologetically, "and we are alone. I mean we haven't *many* men in the house," she quickly added, conscious of having made known the household's weakness to a stranger.

Mark smiled. The young lady was looking at him as he did so, and she thought he had a very charming smile.

"We will sleep anywhere you choose to put us. Least-a-ways we ain't purticular."

The first sentence was spoken in his natural way; the second in dialect. Mark's manner of speaking to her was singularly mixed.

"I suppose your men are fighting our battles," he remarked, to relieve an awkward pause.

"Papa is away."

"Have you no brothers?"

"Yes, one; he is fighting for the Confederacy."

"And your father? is he at the war?"

"No; papa does not care much about the war."

"Perhaps he's a Union man."

"Well, yes. Papa *is* Union."

Mark concluded to hazard a surmise. "Was he driven out?" he asked.

"Not exactly," she said, with a frown. "He's gone North, though."

She did not like to tell the whole story to a stranger, who was gradually getting a good deal of information. Her father had come to Chattanooga from the North years before, where he had married a Southern woman. After the opening of the war, on account of his pronounced Union sentiments, he had been warned several times to leave, and his family were much relieved when he was well away from the danger that threatened him.

"You are divided," said Mark, "as we are. Now, my leetle brother hyar's a Union boy. I'm Confed'rate."

There was a pause, and the girl, remarking that she would see about their supper, turned and went into the house.

There was a delay in getting the meal ready. Perhaps the negro cook demurred at cooking for "poor white trash"; at any rate, it was quite dark before supper was announced. The

mistress of the house came out, and as Mark saw her eyeing them both, he knew that she came to have a look at them. Fortunately for him, the darkness prevented her getting a good view of him. Mark at once commenced to probe a mother's heart by dwelling on the tired condition of little Jakey, and kept it up till the lady was quite unwilling to send the boy to sleep in the barn. She inwardly resolved that the child should have a comfortable bed.

Jakey ate a hearty supper—the heartier for the delay—and the two wayfarers were shown upstairs to a large room with a big bed in it. A few sticks were lighted on the hearth to dry the dampness, for the room had been long unused, and there was a general air of comfort. Jakey, who had never seen such luxury, rolled his little eyes about and wondered. But he was too tired to waste much time in admiration. He was soon in bed and asleep.

IV.

SLACK, THE FARMER'S SON.

MARK took his pipe and went down to the yard to have a smoke. Going back to the barn, he entered into conversation with an old darky sitting on a barrel by the stable door, and evidently master of the horse.

"Fine night, uncle."

"Yas, bery fine night, sah."

"That's not very good tobacco you're smoking, uncle. You'd better take some o' this hyar."

"Thank y', sah."

"Do you hear any news, uncle——?"

"Dan'l. My name's Dan'l, sah. No, sah ; I don' git no news 'cept de sodgers is getting mighty thick at Chattenooogy."

"Do you know how many are there?"

"I reckon 'bout free hundred thousand."

Mark laughed.

"You're not much at figures," he said.

"No, sah ; I ain't got no larnen."

"Uncle, I shan't want anything of you while I'm hyar, but you must have somep'n to

remember me by all the same," and Mark put a new crisp dollar greenback in the old man's hand.

"Bress de Lo'd ; you is de fines' specermon ob a po' white genleman I eber had de faciltude ob meeten."

"Well, don't spoil it all by tellen tother hands. Keep it to yourself."

"Sho nuff. I ain't gwine to tell nobody."

Mark left Uncle Daniel chuckling on his barrel, and strolled about the grounds. Presently he found himself walking near the front of the house. The mother and daughter sat on the veranda in the moonlight. Presently the daughter came down the steps and advanced to where Mark was loitering.

"Mamma says that if you like you may—she would be pleased to have you come up and sit on the veranda."

"Thank' you !" Mark was about to lift his hat in his usual deferential manner, but suddenly remembered that he was not supposed to be a gentleman. He followed the girl up on to the veranda, and she placed a seat for him near where they were sitting.

"Your brother is a good deal younger than you," said the mother, when Mark was seated.

"Oh, yes, ma'm ; he is ten years younger."

"You don't resemble each other at all. You are light and he is dark."

"So we don't. Jakey's my stepbrother, you know."

"You didn't tell us that," remarked the lady.

"You're very thoughtful of him," said Miss Laura, "considering he is only your stepbrother."

"Wal, ma'm, I'm very fond of him all the same."

"He seems to be a peculiar child."

"Yas, Jakey he *is* peculiar; very peculiar, ma'm."

"You haven't told us your name yet," said the mother.

"Slack. I'm Farmer Slack's son."

"How many field hands does your father own?"

"Father, he don't own no niggers at all. We're jest only poor whites."

"You're very frank about it," said Laura.

"Wal, there ain't no use maken purtentions."

"And you go to Chattanooga to-morrow?" asked the mother.

"Yas, ma'm; I cal'late ter do some traden thar."

"And you will return this way?"

"I reckon I'll be along hyar in a few days."

The mother continued the pumping process for a while, but whether she made no progress,

or whether Mark succeeded in establishing himself in her confidence, she arose, and walked with all the stateliness of a Southern high-born matron into the house. There she resumed the book she had been reading earlier in the evening.

Mark had kept up his assumed character very well during her presence. Now that he was left alone with the daughter, he was put to a much severer test. The girl had something of the stateliness of her mother, as that stateliness had appeared in her mother's youth. Mark had been so used from his childhood to meet a refined bearing with one equally refined that he found it difficult to avoid doing so now.

"Don't you love to look at the stars, Mr. Slack?" asked the young lady.

"Wal yes, Miss ——"

"My name is Laura Fain."

"I hev always been fond o' the science of ——" He paused; he suddenly remembered that poor "white trash" were not usually versed in any of the sciences.

"Astronomy?" she supplied.

"Wal, yas."

"How did you come to learn astronomy?"

"Oh, I don't know nothen 'bout it," he said quickly. "I hearn a man at Jasper talken onct. He said a heap o' quar things."

"What bright star is that?" pointing.

"Venus, I reckon."

"I wonder how far it is from us?" she said musingly.

"Venus? why Venus is sixty-eight millions of miles, I reckon."

"I happen to know that's a correct answer."

Mark suddenly became conscious of having forgotten himself. He recollected his critical position and resolved to proceed with greater care.

"How far is the moon?" asked Miss Fain.

"The moon's a hundred million miles, I reckon."

"Oh, no. You're far out of the way there. It's only about two hundred and forty thousand miles."

"Wal, now!" exclaimed Mark, in well feigned surprise.

She looked searchingly at him, but Mark looked as if he had simply received an interesting piece of information.

"Do you like poetry?" she asked, changing the subject.

"Some 'at."

"My favorite poet is Tennyson. Is he yours, too?"

This was dangerous ground for Mark. He had a special fondness for poetry and was

more likely to betray himself on this than on any other subject.

"No," he said, "I love Shelley best."

"Why, Mr. Slack! how can you understand Shelley? I can't."

"Wal, he *is* kinder obscure like."

"Do you remember any of his poems? If you do I would like to hear you repeat it."

"Wal, I mought give you a few lines of the 'Ode to the Spirit o' Nature.'"

"Please do."

Mark would have done well to let the "Ode to the Spirit of Nature" alone; but with a beautiful girl beside him, the half moon sinking in the west, and all nature in repose, he momentarily forgot his assumed character entirely. He began, intending to give only a few lines and not to forget his dialect; but the spirit of nature was in him as well as in the poem, and by the time he had recited a few lines he was as oblivious to the character of Slack the farmer's son, as if he had been the poet himself. Suddenly he awoke to the consciousness of having given the whole poem in his natural tone, and with his ordinary accent.

"Mr. Slack," said his listener, when he had finished, "did you learn that from a man in Jasper?"

"No—no—I—wal," he stammered, "I read it in a book."

He stole a glance at his companion, but failed to detect any unusual expression on her face. He took courage.

"What do you raise on your plantation?" she asked.

"Oh, we put in some potatoes and corn and straw this year."

"Straw?"

"No, no; not straw." Mark was as little conversant with the farmer's art as he was familiar with the poets. "I mean hay."

The girl looked at him and smiled.

"The wheat was all gotten in early this summer, I am told," she remarked casually.

"Yas, we got in ourn early. We jest finished up before I kem away."

"Why, Mr. Slack!"

Mark knew that he had blundered again.

"Wheat is gathered in July," she informed the young farmer.

"I mean the corn," he said wildly.

"The corn comes later. It is ripening now."

Mark felt it was all up with him so far as deceiving Miss Fain as to his being a farmer, but he struck out boldly to undo some of the mischief:

"Wal, you see, Miss Fain, to tell the whole

truth, dad he don't reckon much on my farmen. He says I aughter be a perfessor or somep'n o' that sort."

"A gentleman, for instance."

Mark made no reply. For the first time he detected irony in her tone.

"Mr. Slack—if that is really your name, which I don't believe—you are certainly not very complimentary to my sense of perception."

"How so?"

"In trying to make me think you are not an educated gentleman."

Mark saw the futility of keeping up the sham with Miss Laura Fain any longer. He resolved to give her so much of his confidence as was necessary to keep her from betraying him, if indeed he could do so at all. His manner and his tone changed in a twinkling.

"I will be frank with you. I am not what I have pretended. But I am not here to injure you or yours."

"Who are you?" She spoke with a certain severity that she had not shown before.

"I cannot tell you. My secret is not my own."

"Are you a Union man?"

"Yes."

"A Northerner?"

"Yes; but let that suffice. You would regret it if I should confide anything more to

you. Yet from this brief interview I have learned to trust you sufficiently to place my life in your keeping."

She thought a moment. A faint shudder passed over her.

"I don't want to know your secret."

"Will you tell your mother what you have discovered?" asked Mark anxiously.

"Not for worlds."

"You suspect——" He paused and looked at her inquiringly.

"Yes, yes. Don't say any more. Don't breathe another word. Only go away from here as soon as possible."

"I shall go to-morrow morning. I shall always hold you in grateful remembrance. You are a splendid—a lovely woman. I owe you——"

"Yes, yes; go; go early."

She rose and went into the house. In a few minutes a colored boy came out and told Mark that he would show him to his room. As Mark had been there before, he knew this meant that he was expected to retire for the night.

As he went by the parlor he glanced in. The mother sat by a lamp on a "center table" reading. Miss Fain's face was also bent over a book. It was white as the margin of the page she pretended to read.

V.

GLORIOUS PERFIDY.

WHEN Mark went downstairs the next morning, followed by Jakey, they were invited into the breakfast room. Laura Fain was there, but her mother was not. Mark looked at Laura, but she avoided his gaze. He asked after her mother.

"Mamma scarcely ever gets up to breakfast," she said, as she poured out a substitute for coffee.

During the meal she said but little, and that was only on commonplace subjects. She seemed to have more on her mind than the soldier who was taking his life in his hands, and studiously avoided looking at him at all.

Jakey ate heartily. Mark noticed him eating with his knife, and otherwise displaying his humble origin, while he was himself eating like a gentleman. He thought that it was lucky Mrs. Fain was not at the table.

After breakfast Mark followed his hostess through a door opening into a sitting-room on the opposite side of the hall from the parlor.

"Miss Fain," he said, "I know too well the

station of your family and Southern customs not to accept as a gift the hospitality you have afforded. I can only express my indebtedness, and the hope that some day the war may be over and I can come down here and show my gratitude for something of far more moment to me than a night's lodging."

He paused and then added:

"May I ask a question? Are you a Union or a Confederate girl?"

"Confederate."

Mark looked at her uneasily.

"I inferred from what you said last night that you will not betray me."

"I will not."

"But you think you ought to."

"I do."

Mark stood gazing at her. She was looking out of the window with a troubled expression.

"Miss Fain," he said, "you may be doing wrong; you may be doing right. At any rate you are acting the part of a woman, and this act makes you in my eyes the loveliest woman that lives."

The words were scarcely spoken when the muscles of the girl's face contracted into an expression of horror. Mark could not understand why his speech had so affected her. The natural uncertainty of his position impelled him

to look about him for the cause. Glancing out of the front window he saw an officer in gray uniform on horseback in the act of reaching down to open the gate.

"Come! quick!" she said, seizing his arm. "No, no! Mamma! She doesn't know. Oh, what shall we do?"

Mark took her by the hand and spoke to her coolly but quickly. "Call Jakey for me and we will both go downstairs and from there to the barn. We can then go out without meeting this officer, for he is doubtless coming in. There is no especial danger. We shall meet plenty of soldiers before we return."

She flew out of the room to find Jakey. While she was gone Mark watched the approaching horseman. He was a fine specimen of a Southern man; tall and slender, with long black hair, mustache and goatee, and a fine black eye. He looked, as he came riding up the roadway, the impersonation of the Southern gentleman.

Before he had dismounted, Mark and Jakey were on their way to the barn.

Laura Fain opened the front door just as the officer was coming up the steps.

"Why, Cameron!" she exclaimed, "how did you get away? I thought you told me you were to be officer of the guard to-day."

"I persuaded my friend the adjutant to detail another man."

"Was there a special reason?"

"Certainly. I positively couldn't stand it another day not to see you. Besides, we are momentarily expecting orders to cross to this side of the river."

"But you will be nearer to us then, won't you?"

"I am afraid not. Once on this side we'll not stop nearer than Dallas or Poe's. We may join Colonel Forrest near Sparta, or wherever he may be, doubtless somewhere in the enemy's rear. He seldom troubles the Yankees in front. But you are not listening, my darling; and you are pale; you are not ill?"

"Certainly not."

"You are sorry that I came?"

"Why, Cameron; what do you mean? You know I always want you to come."

She led the way into the sitting-room from which Mark had disappeared but a minute before—a minute is a long while sometimes;—Mrs. Fain entered and received the guest most graciously.

Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh was a young Virginian, a graduate of the University of Virginia law school, the son of wealthy parents, whose acres and negroes were numbered by

thousands. He had known the Fains before the war, Mrs. Fain having been born and reared in the Old Dominion. During a visit of Laura to his people, shortly before the breaking out of hostilities, he had fallen in love with her, had proposed and was accepted. Both families being agreeable, the two were engaged to be married.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Captain" said Mrs. Fain.

"I did not suppose I could get away to-day."

"Everything is unexpected in these times. We never know who is coming to us. Last night I slept uneasily for fear that we harbored a guerrilla in the house."

"How is that?" asked Captain Fitz Hugh.

"Where are the strangers, Laura?"

"I think they are gone, mamma."

"A countryman and his little brother," said Mrs. Fain to the captain. "Laura thought him quite a gentleman for one so poorly dressed."

"But I changed my mind, mamma," said Laura quickly.

"And what was the occasion of so sudden a *bouleversement*?" asked the captain.

"Why—why, when we were sitting on the veranda after you went in, mamma——"

"Sitting on the veranda with a country-man!" exclaimed the lover.

"Well, yes; mamma said to invite him up. But I was going to say," Laura's inventive powers had gained time to act, by the interruption, "I found that he was only an ignorant farmer after all, for I asked him how far the moon was, and he said he reckoned it was a hundred million miles."

"That doesn't prove anything" Fitz Hugh remarked. "I don't believe there's an officer in my regiment knows that. But it becomes us to be very careful: the commanding general has made it known unofficially through his staff officers that he is especially desirous of concealing his intentions. One spy penetrating for even a day at Chattanooga might frustrate all his plans. If the enemy knew that we are concentrating there, and how weak we are there at present, he would, or at least he should, come down with a large force and drive us south."

A troubled expression crossed Laura's face.

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Fain. "I was not aware of that. Suppose the young man was a spy."

"Cameron," said Laura, "I wish you wouldn't talk so to mamma. She will be suspicious of every poor beggar that asks a crust. The

man's name was Slack. There are plenty of Slacks among the poor whites about here. I have a sick family of that name on my hands now not a mile up the road."

"Has the fellow gone?" asked Fitz Hugh. "I think I would better see him."

"Gone? of course he's gone," said Laura, with a heaving bosom.

"Where did he say he was going?"

"To Chattanooga," said Mrs. Fain.

"I'll mount and follow him. I can easily overtake him on horseback."

"Nonsense," said Laura with a pout; "you have kept away from me for a week, and now you are going as soon as you've come."

"But, my darling, would you have me——"

"I would have you stay where you are; and——"

Mrs. Fain, seeing that some cooing was coming, wisely withdrew.

"And what, sweetheart?"

"Tell me what I love to hear," she said softly.

"I've told you that so often you should certainly be tired of it by this time."

Fitz Hugh looked inquiringly into her face as he smoothed back her hair. He was used to these requests to repeat his assurances of affection, but there was a nervous something

about his *fiancée* this morning that puzzled him.

His back was toward the window, while she was facing it. Suddenly she clasped her arms tightly around him.

"Now go if you can," she said, affecting a playful tone.

"Why, Laura! What does this mean?" he asked, astonished.

"You don't love me," she whined.

"Love you, pet! You know I do."

"Then why do you act so?"

"Act how?"

"You never come any more but you want to go right away."

"But, sweetheart,"—a half dozen kisses for exclamation points,—"I only intend being gone a little while."

"If you once start out to follow somebody you don't know anything about, you'll be gone all day, and then you'll be ordered away, and may be I'll never see you any more."

Never was a lover more charmed at such evidence of woman's affection, and never had this lover less cause to be charmed at the evidence of his hold upon Laura Fain. Had Captain Fitz Hugh seen what Laura Fain saw from the moment she put her arms around him and held his back to the window,—Mark

and Jakey going down the walk to the gate,—
he would have exclaimed :

“ Oh, woman, thy name is perfidy ! ”

“ Oh, woman,” the departing soldier would
have responded, “ thy name is indeed perfidy ;
but how glorious thy perfidy ! ”

VI.

IN THE ENEMY'S LINES.

"J AKEY," said Mark, as they passed behind trees that hid them from the house. "I don't like that officer coming to the Fain plantation just at this time. There'll surely be some mention of us, and it is possible he may want to have a look at us. You know, Jakey, we're only poor, modest people, and don't want to be stared at."

"We ain't got our store clothes on, and don't want ter make no acquaintances," Jakey observed solemnly.

Mark had noticed Laura Fain's agitation when she caught sight of the officer at the gate, and knew there was good reason for it. He did not fear that she would betray him unintentionally, but that she might be led to do so from her very anxiety to keep his secret.

"The first chance we get, Jakey, we'll take to the woods. We told them we were going to Chattanooga, and if this officer takes it into his aristocratic head to escort us with true Southern politeness a part of the way, he'll expect to find us on the Chattanooga pike."

“‘N’twouldn’t be perlite fur ter git in his way.”

They had gone but a trifling distance when they come to a creek flowing—as a wayfarer they met told them—through Moccasin Gap. The road crossed it by something betwixt a bridge and a culvert. Mark led the way from the road up the creek, and began to climb the hills, on which there was sufficient growth of timber to afford concealment. For an hour he trudged along with Jakey beside him. He tried to get the boy to give him his hand to help him along, but Jakey demurred indignantly, and kept his sturdy little legs so well at work that he never once fell behind his companion.

At last they came to a hut occupied by an old negro.

“Good-morning, uncle!” said Mark.

“Mornen, sah.”

“Hev y’ seen anything of a colored boy ’bout eighteen years old go by hyar this mornen?”

“No, sah.”

“He’s my boy Sam, and I’m a hunten him. He run away last night. He’ll git a hundred ef I ketch him.”

“I ain’t saw him, sah, ’n I tell y’ what, marstr, ef I had saw him I wouldn’t inform y’ ob de fac.”

"That's the way with you niggers, since the Yankees turned your heads. But it won't last long. Our boys 'll drive 'em so fur no'th pretty soon that you darkies 'll hev to stop runnen away."

"Now don' y' believe dat so sartin."

"Do you really believe the Yanks can whip us?"

"De Lord hes sent 'em to tote his colored people out o' bondage."

Mark was satisfied with this preliminary examination that he could trust the old man.

"Uncle, I'm no Secesh. I'm a Union man. I want to stay with you to-day and travel to-night. Keep me all day and I'll go away as soon as it is dark."

"Fo' de Lord. I knowed y' wa'n't no South'n man all de time."

"How?"

"Y' ain't got de South'n man's way o' talkin'. Yo' did hit well enough, but y' caint fool me."

"Well, will you keep us?"

"Reckon I will."

"What's your name?"

"Randolph's my name, sah. Jeff'son Randolph. My marstr said he gib me a mighty big name, but hit didn't do no good. Dey always call me notten but Jeff."

"You're as well off as the President of the Confederacy in that respect," said Mark. "I guess we'll go inside."

"Yes, go in dar. Keep dark."

Mark and Jakey waited for the day to pass, and as they had no means of amusing themselves it passed very slowly. Jakey played about the creek for a while, but both were glad when the darkness came and they could get away.

Before setting out on his expedition Mark had carefully studied a map of the region, preferring to fix it in his mind than to carry it about his person. Upon leaving Jefferson Randolph's hut he made direct for the Tennessee River. Once there, he knew from his remembrance of the map that he was not far from Chattanooga, and that between him and that place was Moccasin Point, formed by a bend, or rather a loop, in the river, the point putting out southward for more than two miles, with a distance of nearly a mile across its neck. But he knew the ground was high on the east shore of the peninsula, and he did not know the proper place to strike inland and cut off the distance around the river's margin. There was no one near to inform him, so he kept on by the river.

It was late at night when they reached a

point where the river took a slight turn to the east, and about a mile from the quick bend around Moccasin Point. Mark was anxious to enter Chattanooga either late at night or soon after daylight, hoping to meet few people, that his entrance might not be noticed. He cast his eye about for some means of crossing the river. Noticing a skiff moored just below a hut he surmised that the skiff belonged to some one living in the hut. Going to the door he knocked.

"Who's thar?"

"Do you uns own the skiff on the river below hyar?"

"Wal, supposen I does?"

"I want to cross."

"What d' yer want ter do thet fur at this time o' night?"

"Father dyen. Just got word a spell ago."

"What'll y' give ter get over?"

"Five dollars."

"What kind o' shinplasters?"

"Greenbacks."

"Whar d' y' git 'em?"

"From some people ez got 'em traden' with the Yankee sojers at Battle Creek."

"All right, stranger, but it's a sight o' bad times ter be called ter a man's door at night.

You uns go down ter the river 'n I'll cover y' with my gun tel I know yer all right."

"I won't mind a small thing like that, ef you'll put me 'n my leetle brother across."

Mark and his companion went down to the river. Pretty soon a wild-looking man, with a beard growing straight out from his face like the spokes of a cart wheel, came cautiously down, covering them with a shot gun as he proceeded.

"Got a pass, stranger?"

"No."

"Reckon they won't let y' land when y' get over thar."

"These army fellers are like a rat trap," said Mark; "they ain't so particular as to goen' in; it's the goen' out they don't like. But y' better try to strike a point on the river whar ther ain't no guard."

"Fur how much?"

"An extra fiver."

"Greenback?"

"You ain't very patriotic. Won't y' take Confederate bills?"

"Not when I can get green uns."

"Y' ain't a Union man, are y'?"

"No. But I know a valyble thing when I sees it."

The night would have been very dark had it

not been for the moon behind the clouds. As it was the boat could only be seen from the shore when they drew too near. They pulled up the river west of Moccasin Point, keeping near the east bank. They could see camp fires of guards on the other shore. Once, getting too near a river picket, they were seen and challenged.

"Who goes thar?"

"Oh, none o' your business!" said Mark jokingly.

"Pull in hyar, or I'll make it some o' my business."

"Oh now, see hyar! We can't stop every five minutes to please a guard; how do you know but we're on army business?"

"Well, pull in hyar and show yer papers."

Meanwhile the ferryman was keeping the oars moving gently and the boat turned at an angle with the current, which was taking the boat toward the east shore. "Now pull away hearty," whispered Mark, and the boat shot out of sight of the picket in a twinkling. A bullet whistled over their heads, but wide of the mark.

"Golly!" exclaimed Jakey. "What a purty tune it sings!"

They were now off Moccasin Point, and Mark began to look for a landing place. Just above,

he noticed a camp fire, and above this was a place where the bank was low, with overhanging trees. Mark directed the ferryman to pull for these trees. He slipped a handkerchief in one of the row locks—the only one used in turning the boat into shore—so as to muffle the oar. The coast seemed to be clear for a landing, but as they drew near they proceeded cautiously and listened for the slightest sound. The boat's nose touched without noise and Mark and Jakey got out.

Mark handed the wild-whiskered ferryman the crisp ten-dollar note, which he clenched eagerly.

“Yer purty well ter do, stranger, considerin’ yer close.”

“Didn’t y’ hyar what I said to the guard ’bout business for the army?”

“Yas.”

“Wal, don’t say nothin’ ’bout it. Th’ Confederate service pays ez it goes.”

The ferryman cared little whom he pulled if he could make ten dollars in one night, and dipping his oars in the water, rowed away from the shore.

Mark turned to look about him. His first move was to get under the trees. From there he proceeded inland for a short distance, look-for something.

"Ah, here it is!" he said presently. "Now I know where I am."

He had struck the Nashville & Chattanooga railroad, which runs close to the river bank for about a mile near where he landed. He knew he was about two miles from the town.

"Now, Jakey," he said, "we'll bivouac right here. As soon as it is light we must set out. Are you sleepy?"

"*Am* I? Reckon I am."

VII.

THE CAMPS AT CHATTANOOGA.

AT the first sign of dawn Mark awakened his companion, who was sleeping so soundly that it required a good shake to rouse him. Jakey sat up and rubbed his eyes with his fists while Mark looked about him. He could see down the river for half a mile, where he noticed bluffs to the water's edge, and thought it was lucky he had not been forced to land there. Beyond were the Racoon Mountains, while close to the southwest Lookout Mountain towered above him.

After Jakey had completed his fist toilet—the only toilet either made—Mark led off on the railroad ties to Chattanooga. The railroad soon left the river bank, and they proceeded in a northeasterly direction, striking the town from the south.

A great many tents were in sight as they passed along, and Mark judged at once that there was a large force concentrated there. He was tempted to turn and retrace his steps, for he knew already what he was sent to discover,

but to get out was more difficult than to get in, and he was not willing to risk an attempt in the day time, so he entered the town in which citizen and soldier were alike asleep, and without meeting a soul, walked about till he came to a hotel called the Crutchfield House. As he approached, the door opened and a negro boy with a broom in his hand stood in the opening.

"Can I git a room?" asked Mark.

"No, sah; not till de proprietor wakes up."

"My little brother is tired; he must go to sleep at once."

The boy's eyes opened wide at a dollar bill slipped in his hand. Without a word he took a key from the rack above a desk in the office, and in a few minutes both travelers were safely lodged, with no one but the negro having seen them enter the town or the house.

"So far, so good," said Mark. "Now comes the real racket. By this time to-morrow morning I shall be either safe across the river again, or I wouldn't give a Confederate bond for my life."

After a few hours' sleep he rose, and calling Jakey, they made a toilet and went down to breakfast. Mark had purposely neglected to write his name on the register, and hoped that the landlord would not notice the omission.

But he did, and the guest entered his name as Mark Slack, Jasper, Tenn.

After breakfast he took Jakey and strolled around the town, making purchases. He thought it prudent to get some of his greenbacks changed for Confederate bills. He followed the suggestion Jakey had made at setting out and bought some calico and tobacco, and the squirrel gun Jakey had modestly suggested for himself. Mark was not unwilling to have the gun with them, as he thought it might possibly be of service in case he should get hunted and cornered; but in that event he counted very little on any means of defense except flight or deception.

Mark was astonished at the number of officers and soldiers he saw in the streets. He found a new general in command, of whom he had not heard as a prominent leader, Braxton Bragg. He made a circuit of the town and an estimate of the troops, but this was of little value, for upon the arrival of trains, regiment after regiment marched into camp. Mark stood on the sidewalk holding Jakey by the hand, looking at the Confederates tramping along under the Stars and Bars, their bands, when they had any, which was rare, playing discordantly "Dixie" or "The Bonny Blue Flag."

"What regiment air thet ar?" asked Mark of a soldier standing beside him puffing at a rank cigar.

"Eighth Tennessee."

"Whar they all come from?"

"Tupelo. Come from thar m'self a spell ago."

"Whar y' goen'?"

"Only old Bragg knows, and he won't tell. Reckon we're goen no'th to Knoxville ter foller th' two brigades ez went up a spell ago."

"What troops air all these hyar and them ez is comen?"

"Wal, thur's Cheatham's and Withers's divisions and I reckon Anderson's. I sor Ginerol Polk ter-day 'n they say Hardee's hyar. I'm in th' Twenty-fourth Tennessee m'self, and thet's Cheatham's. Lay's cavalry brigade is hyar. Thet's all the cavalry I knows on."

Mark was amazed. A large Southern force was concentrating at Chattanooga and perhaps they would pour into Tennessee or Kentucky by one of the routes pointed out to him by his general. It was a splendid plan, provided the general who was to execute it could keep his enemy from knowing his intentions long enough to throw an army on his flank or rear.

Then in making a circuit of the town Mark was impressed with the natural strength of the position. He gazed over the plain eastward, his eye resting on Missionary Ridge ; but did not dream of the soldiers' battle destined to take place there a year later, when the men in the Army of the Cumberland, disregarding the plans of their superiors, would start from the bottom of that mountain and defeat an enemy pouring shot and shell down upon them from the top.

"Why didn't our generals occupy this place when they could?" sighed Mark. "Now it is too late."

While it was evident to Mark that the enemy were concentrating for a move against the Union lines, there was nothing to indicate where they would strike except the mention of the two brigades as having gone to Knoxville. He knew that they might strike any one of several points from Battle Creek to Knoxville, and eagerly sought for some indication where it would be. He strolled about with Jakey all the afternoon, the two sufficiently resembling country bumpkins to avoid suspicion. Passing a recruiting station, Mark went inside the tent, where an officer was writing at a pine table.

"Cap," he said, "I ben thinken I'd like ter jine the army."

"You're just the man we want. You've got plenty of bone and muscle. I should reckon you'd a been in the ranks afore this."

"Wal, I don't want ter fight outen my State 'f I kin help it."

"What State?"

"Tennessee."

"I reckon you'll have a chance to fight *in* it, if you join the army."

"Reckon so?"

"Yas; I'm recruiten fur Cheatham's division. Thur all Tennessee rigements in our division except the artillery 'n a rigement o' Georgia and one o' Texas infantry."

"Whar is yer division?"

"Across the river. At Dallas or Poe's; somewhere up thar. Y' better let me put yo' down fur my rigement, the ——th Tennessee."

"I mought hev ter go way down South."

"No fear o' that just now."

"What makes y' cal'clate on 't?"

"There's two divisions across now—ourn and Withers's. Y' don't reckon their goen ter cross the river fur the purpose o' marchen south, do y'?"

"Oh, I don't know nothen 'bout military."

"Wal, will you join us?"

"Ef y' reckon all the sojers here is goen to fight in old Tennessee, I reckon I will. The

abolition army hez overrun our State, 'n I want ter see 'em driv out."

"The way to do it, my good man, is to take a musket and help."

"Do you reckon that's what we're goen ter do?"

"I tell you that two divisions are already across, and I happen to know that all the transportation in the shape of cars and locomotives that can be found are bein' corraled hyar fur a further movement. Come, now, my man, stop talken and take yer place whar yer aughter be. What's yer name?"

The officer took up a pen.

"All right, Cap; count me in. I'll jist go'n git my bundle and be back hyar in half an hour."

The captain hesitated. Mark began to fear that he was thinking of using force rather than let so promising a recruit go.

"Are you sure you'll come back?"

"Sarten, Cap."

Mark moved away, and it was not until he had got out of sight that he realized he had run a great risk, for he saw that the captain would have detained him had he not believed in his sincerity about enlisting.

Mark went straight to the hotel and paid his bill. He feared the recruiting officer might

send for him or have him followed, so without waiting to eat his supper he made a package of his purchases ; Jakey took his gun and slung his powder and shot flask over his shoulder ; then the two left the hotel to begin an attempt to leave Chattanooga. Their stay had been only from sunrise to sunset, but Mark had gained all the information he was likely to acquire, and was anxious to get away with it. True, he did not know where the enemy would strike, but this he would not be likely to learn.

VIII.

PASSING A PICKET.

GOING down to the ferry they found a boat which had all it could do to carry the soldiers and citizens who were crossing. Mark thought he would try what assurance would do in getting across without a pass. He found the guard more watchful than he expected.

"Can't y' pass me 'n my leetle brother, Lieutenant?" he asked. "We ben doen some traden in Chattennoogy and want ter git home. We ben buyen some caliker fur the wimmen folks."

"Old Bragg himself couldn't go over without a pass," responded the officer.

"Whar mought I git one?" asked Mark.

"At headquarters, I reckon."

Mark turned away. He considered the expediency of going to headquarters and asking for a pass, but regarded this course fraught with too much risk. He determined to make an attempt to get out of town and across the river by the route over which he had entered. He knew the ground by this route, and that

was a great advantage. If he could steal his way beyond the picket he could doubtless find a method of crossing. Perhaps he might make his way down the river and across at Shell mound, or still lower to the mouth of Battle Creek, held by the Union forces.

Mark skirted the town on the west, and then took a course directly south, till he came to the railroad. This he followed to a point near where he had bivouacked the night before. Crawling to a rise in the ground and motioning Jakey to keep back, he laid down on his stomach to make a survey.

It was nearly dark. Silhouettes of figures were passing between him and a camp fire beside the railroad track. Beyond, the palisades of Lookout Mountain stood out boldly against a streak of twilight in the west. Between the track and the river was an open space, over which he must pass to get by the picket. The river bank would afford some protection. Near where he was it was steep, and the current set directly against it, but lower down by the picket there appeared to be places where a man could walk under the low bluff.

The moon was about three-quarters full, and the night was clear except for clouds that would float lazily over Lookout Mountain and across the moon's face, so that at times

her light was partly obscured. Mark thought of waiting till she had set, but this would not be till after daylight. He made up his mind to make the attempt at once.

Calling Jakey, he gave him an account of what he intended to try for, and told him that if it should be necessary to run under fire, the boy was to lie down, and if necessary give himself up, but on no account to risk being shot. Jakey only half promised, and Mark was obliged to be satisfied with this. Then, waiting for a little while longer for the twilight to entirely disappear, and a cloud to obscure the moon, he lay on the ground gathering his forces and getting his mind into that cool state requisite for one who is about to make a very hazardous attempt.

Presently the conditions were favorable and he got up and led the way to the river bank, which he proposed to skirt. He left his bundle, but took Jakey's gun, loaded and capped, in his hand. They soon gained the point where they had landed the night before, nearly opposite where Mark had seen the silhouettes on the railroad. Treading as noiselessly as possible, they passed along the river margin under the overhanging bank, till they came to a place where the bank was low. Stooping, they proceeded for a short distance till they

reached the root of a tree that had been felled long before. Here they paused and listened.

Suddenly they heard what sounded like a musket brought from a shoulder down to the hollow of a hand, and a voice :

“Who comes thar?”

“Corporal of the guard, with relief.”

“Advance, Corporal, and give the counter-sign.”

Then there was some muttering, and footsteps tramping away.

Mark peeped between the roots of the stump toward the point from which the sounds had come. He saw, not a hundred feet away, a man sitting on a log with his musket resting against his shoulder, the butt on the ground. He was looking listlessly up at the sky. Presently he took a clay pipe out of his pocket, which he filled, and, touching a match, lighted it.

“He’s the river picket,” said Mark to himself.

The sentinel sat smoking while Mark meditated. His first thought was, why did I bring this boy? The situation was perilous enough without an incumbrance. The guard was facing the space over which they would have to pass to escape ; there might be a slight chance for life to make a dash were he alone, but with the boy it was not to be thought of, and Mark

was unwilling to leave him. He looked back with a view to retracing the route over which he had come. He was horrified to see a sentinel pacing a hundred yards above. He had been placed there by the relief.

The only hope was to wait for the man nearest him to relax his watchfulness, and attempt to pass him. The sentinel up the river was not to be feared except by going back, for, from the nature of the ground, the fugitives would be hidden from him if they should go forward.

Mark resolved to wait and watch.

The minutes seemed hours : the hours days. The soldier still sat on the log, though now and then he would get up, and leaving his musket leaning on it, saunter back and forth on his beat. He well knew there was no enemy to fear ; his duty was little more than a form.

He began to hum a few strains of "The Suwanee River."

"Poor devil," said Mark to himself, "he, too, is thinking of home. What a cursed thing war is ! If ever I get out of this I'll do no more such duty. Give me an enemy face to face, bullets before me, and no gibbet behind me."

But he had said this many a time before.

"My good man," talking to the soldier, but without making any sound, "if you will go far

enough from that musket you'll never get back to your Suwanee River."

"Nonsense, Mark," the sentinel seemed to say to him, "a shot would arouse the whole picket post. Besides, if that's your game, why don't you riddle me with Jakey's shotgun?"

Then the stillness was broken by the sound of oars out on the river. How Mark longed for the boat to come and take him from his terrible position. But whoever was working those oars pulled on, unmindful of the man who so keenly envied the oarsman's freedom. The sounds became fainter and fainter, till Mark could hear them no more. He sighed as if he had lost a dear friend.

"Jakey's comfortable, anyway," he said, looking down at the boy. He had dropped asleep, and Mark, for the first time in his life, envied a human being the protection of weakness. There was innocent childhood, unconscious of danger, sleeping sweetly, the boyish face lighted by the moon.

At last Mark heard the relief coming. The sentinel took his gun and began to pace his beat. The usual form was proceeded with and the relief marched to the sentinel up the river. Mark observed the man that had been left on post.

"I hope this fellow will be more inclined to rest," he mused.

But he was disappointed to see the man begin to pace his beat energetically. He seemed to fear that if he did not keep moving he would get drowsy. A half hour passed with scarcely a rest; then another half hour. It was tramp, tramp in one direction, turn, and tramp, tramp back again.

The clouds which continued to pass over the moon became heavier. If the sentinel would only relax his vigilance, these periods of comparative darkness would be favorable to flight. But if the soldier was to keep a proper watch the clouds might die away. Then there was the morning to come. Mark began to lose that coolness which thus far had characterized him. It was the waiting that was wearing him out.

In perhaps an hour after the sentinel came on picket he yawned. This was the first sign of hope for Mark. After a while he sat down on the log and yawned several times at intervals. He got up and paced for a while, but at last sat down again. This time he sat longer and his chin sank on his breast. He roused himself and sank away again. He would not go to sleep comfortably in accordance with Mark's muttered prayer, but took short naps. Mark considered the feasibility of an attempt

to escape between these naps. Without Jakey he would do it ; with Jakey it was too hazardous.

At last the soldier slid down on to the ground, stretched out his legs, and rested his back against the log.

Mark's heart went up into his throat with a sudden joy.

As near as he could guess there remained a quarter of an hour till the next relief would come. He looked at the moon, which was now shining with provoking brightness ; he looked at the man and tried to make sure that he was asleep. It was impossible to tell with any certainty.

" I'll risk it," he said.

He took Jakey up in his arms very carefully, hoping not to waken him, fixing the boy's limp body in the hollow of his left arm. In the right hand he took the squirrel gun, cocked and capped, using the arm at the same time to hold the child. When all was ready he rose slowly, and fixed his eyes on the soldier.

The man did not stir.

Mark moved slowly forward, his eyes riveted on the sentinel. A few steps convinced him that the man really slept. Mark turned his back on him and walked a dozen steps noiselessly, picking a place to plant his foot at each step.

Halt !

Was it the soldier's voice ? Should he turn and shoot him ?

No, only an explosion of a burning brand in the camp fire at the picket guard on the railroad track.

His heart, which had stood still, began thumping like a drumstick.

He turned to look at the sentinel. The man sat there gazing straight at him ; at least so he appeared to Mark. The figure was as plain as day in the moonlight, though too far for Mark to see the eyes. He cast a quick glance down into Jakey's face. He, too, was sleeping peacefully. While these two were in slumberland, Mark felt himself suspended between heaven and hell. And how still it was. Even the hum of insects would have been a relief.

All this occupied but a moment. Mark turned his back again and moved cautiously forward.

His imagination had never served him such tricks. Surely he heard the soldier move. He was getting up on his feet. His musket was leveled at an "aim." A sharp sting under the shoulder blade, and a warm stream flowing down his side. Certainly he had been shot.

Nonsense ! away with such freaks of fancy ! Suddenly he trod on a rotten branch. It

cracked with a sound which seemed to him like the report of a pistol.

Again he paused and turned. He saw the sentinel motionless. He had slipped farther down and his hat had fallen farther over his forehead.

Thank God!

He moved backward, his eyes fixed on his sleeping enemy, occasionally turning to see where he stepped. He was getting near to cover. In this way he passed to within a few steps of concealment. How he coveted the overhanging bank near to him, yet far enough to be useless should the sentinel awake too soon!

Cachew!

This sound was real; it was a sneeze from the picket.

Mark knew that it was a signal of awakening. He darted behind the bank and was out of sight.

He heard the sentinel get up, shake himself, give a yawn, a grunt, as if chilled, and begin to pace his beat.

Mark moved away cautiously, a great flood of joy and thankfulness welling up through his whole nature. After going a sufficient distance to be out of hearing, he awakened Jakey.

"Jakey! Wake up!"

The boy opened his eyes.

"We're beyond the picket."

"Whar's my gun?"

"Oh, blessed childhood," thought Mark, "that in moments of peril can be interested in such trifling things!"

"I have your gun here in my hand. It's safe. Stand on your legs, my boy. We're going on."

Jakey stood on the ground and rubbed his eyes with his fists. Once awake he was awake all over.

They moved on down the river toward the base of Lookout Mountain, soon leaving the river margin and striking inland behind some rising ground. Finding a convenient nook in a clump of bushes wherein to leave Jakey, Mark told him to lie down and stay there while he reconnoitered to find a way to get down the river and to cross it.

Mark hunted nearly all night. He could find no practicable route. He did not know how to proceed around Lookout Mountain, and could find no means of crossing the Tennessee near where he was. At last, looking down from a knoll, he could see the margin of the river at a place where the bank concealed the shore between the base of the bank and the

verge of the water. But what he saw especially, and which gladdened his heart, was a boat moored to the shore and in it a pair of oars.

Going back to the place where he had left Jakey, he wakened him and together they returned to the knoll. The boat was still where he had seen it. Leading the way, Mark descended to the bank. So intent was he upon seizing the boat, that he did not think to approach cautiously. He forgot that where there was a boat with oars in it, the oarsman would likely not be far away.

He jumped down to the slanting ground below and landed in the midst of a party of Confederate soldiers.

IX.

A DESPERATE SITUATION.

NEVER was there a more surprised look on any man's face than on Mark's at the moment he discovered the men into whose midst he had fallen. He knew the range of the Confederate picket line and was unable to understand how this party could be a part of it. The men looked equally surprised at his appearance. Indeed, they seemed more disconcerted at his sudden coming than he was at their being there. When he made his leap among them they were about to get into the boat, and one of them held the painter in his hand. Mark in a twinkling made up his mind that they were not pleased at his appearance. He determined to play a bold game. He had no defined plan when he began to speak to them ; it came to him as he proceeded.

"What are you men doing here?" he asked, in a tone that none but a soldier knows how to assume.

No one answered.

"What regiment do you belong to?"

No answer.

"Is there a non-commissioned officer among you?"

There was so much of authority in Mark's tone that it compelled an answer, and a respectful one.

"No, sir."

"You men are away from your commands without permission. I can see that plainly."

The men looked guilty, but said nothing.

"You evidently don't know me. I am an officer of General Bragg's staff, on an important mission of secret service."

He waited a moment to discover the effect of his words and then proceeded:

"It is a matter of the greatest moment that I get across the river at once. I want you men to pull me over and then report immediately to your colonel. Give me your names."

Without appearing to doubt for a moment that he would be obeyed, he called on the men successively and each man responded with his name. There were five men, and as each answered he saluted respectfully.

"Now, what regiment do you belong to?"

"The —th *Tennessee*."

"The old story," said Mark severely. "You men are doubtless from east Tennessee. You

are deserters, trying to get back to where you came from."

Mark had hit the nail on the head. The men looked terror-stricken. He knew, when he ordered them to pull across the river, that they would obey him gladly. And if he should leave them to report to their colonel, they would attempt to make their way North instead.

"Get into the boat, every one of you."

Every man got into the boat and one of them took the oars.

"Now, if you will get me over quickly I'll see what I can do for you with your commanding officer when I return."

Jakey was standing on the bank with his eyes wide open at this scene. Mark had been a hero with him: now he was little less than a god.

"Do you want to get across the river, my little man?" asked Mark, as if he had never seen the boy before.

"Does I want ter? Course I does."

"Jump in then, quick. I've no time to lose."

Jakey came down and got in with the rest.

"Give way," cried Mark, and the boat shot out from the shore.

Not a dozen strokes had been taken before

Mark, who was delighted at the success of his assurance, saw a sight that made his heart sink within him. A boat shot around Moccasin Point from the eastward.

God in heaven! it was full of armed men.

As soon as they saw the skiff with Mark and the deserters in it—for such they were—they pulled straight for them. In five minutes they were alongside.

"I reckon you're the men we're looking for," said an officer, seated in the stern.

"Who *are* you looking for?" asked Mark, with as much coolness as he could assume.

"Deserters from the —th *Tennessee*."

Mark knew it was all up with him. His assumption of being on General Bragg's staff, which had been so successful a ruse, suddenly appeared to him a halter about his neck.

"Hand over your guns," said the officer.

The guns were handed into the boat, all except Jakey's shot-gun.

"That other-one, too."

"That's only a shot-gun, Captain," said Mark.

"Well, never mind the pop-gun."

Every moment the deserters looked for Mark to declare his exalted position on General Bragg's staff; but no such declaration came. It seemed possible to them that per-

haps he would not wish to disclose his identity to so many; at any rate, they said nothing. Had it not been for this assumption, Mark would have applied to the captain to let a poor countryman and his little brother pass. Had he done so it is quite possible that the men he had deceived, surmising that he was a refugee like themselves, would not have betrayed him; but Mark knew that, besides this danger, the officer having found him in such company would not let him go.

Mark's heart was heavy, as the boat in which he sat was pulled slowly against the current to Chattanooga. He realized that there was now no opportunity for his wits, on which he usually relied, to work. He was in the hands of the enemy: he would not be released without a thorough questioning, and he could say nothing that would not tell against him.

On landing, all were taken to the provost marshal's office. The soldiers acknowledged that they were members of the —th Tennessee Regiment, but stoutly denied that they were deserters. They were Union men, some of them Northerners, who had been impressed into the Confederate service, or had enlisted for the purpose of flying to the stars and stripes as soon as they could get near enough to warrant an attempt. They were sent to their regiment

under guard. As they were leaving, one of them said to Mark:

"I hope you'll keep your promise."

Mark did not reply; he had cherished a hope that they would be taken away before anything would come out as to his assumption of authority.

"What promise?" asked the provost marshal quickly.

"He's an officer on General Bragg's staff. You ought to know him, Colonel."

"The devil!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Oh, I saw the men were doing something they were ashamed of, and I bluffed 'em to row me across," said Mark, with assumed carelessness.

"Who are you?"

"I belong in east *Tennessee*."

"You don't belong in any such place. You're not Southern born at all. You're a Yankee. I thought you were only trying to get North with these men, now I believe you are a spy."

"I'm a Southern man, sartin," said Mark, with such coolness that the officer was for a moment in doubt as to his surmise.

"Let me hear you say New York."

"New York."

"New York," repeated the colonel ironi-

cally. "If you were a Southern man, you'd say Niew Yawk. I shall have to hold you for further information."

"I would like to go to my home in Tennessee. I came here to buy a gun for my brother. But if you won't let me, I'll have to stay with you, I suppose. Only I hope you won't separate us. Jakey's very young and I don't want to turn him adrift alone in a strange town."

"I shall have to hold you till I can report the case to headquarters," said the officer; and Mark and Jakey were led away to a room in the house occupied by the provost marshal for prisoners temporarily passing through his hands.

The reply that came to the announcement of the capture of the citizen and the boy was to hold them under vigilant guard. It was reported that Mark had been personating an officer of the staff and this looked very suspicious; indeed, quite enough so to warrant their trying him for a spy by drum-head court martial, and executing him the next morning.

Mark was searched and everything of value taken from him. They went through Jakey's pockets and felt of the lining of his coat, but as he was a child, the search was not very thorough, or they would have found the bill:

in his boot. They took his gun, but by this time Jakey realized that there was something more momentous than a squirrel gun at stake and parted with it without showing any great reluctance. He realized that Mark, for whom he had by this time conceived a regard little short of idolatry, was in danger, and the boy for the first time began to feel that his friend could not accomplish everything.

Jakey stood looking on stolidly as Mark was searched, till he saw a soldier take Souri's red silk handkerchief. He had produced the impression on the searchers he had at first produced upon Mark, that he was stupid beyond his years. As the man grasped the handkerchief, and was about to put it in his pocket, Jakey set up a howl.

"What's the matter, sonny?" asked one of the soldiers.

"My hanchikuff," he whined.

"Is it yours?"

"Yas."

"Give the boy his wipe," said the man to the would-be appropriator. "Don't rob a child."

So Jakey preserved his handkerchief.

Then they were marched away together to a small building used for a negro jail. It was two stories high, though the lower story had

no windows. The upper part was reached by a long flight of steps outside the building. The lower part was a dungeon, and though used to confine negroes, there had been a number of East Tennesseans imprisoned there. The place was kept by an old man and his wife, named Triggs. Mark was put into a room in the upper story. A guard was stationed at the door, and the only window was barred. Had Mark been arrested with definite proof that he was a spy, he would doubtless have been put in the dungeon. As it was, he was only guarded with ordinary caution. This, however, seemed quite sufficient to prevent his escape. Jakey was put into a room by himself, but he was not required to stay there. He was suffered to go and come at will, except that the guard at the gate was ordered not to let him leave the yard. He asked the jailer's wife to permit him to go in to Mark so often, the first morning of his arrival, that at last the guard at the door was instructed to pass him in and out at will.

"Well, Jakey," said Mark, when they were together in their new quarters, "this looks pretty blue."

"Reckon it does."

"You'd better not stay here. Go out in the yard and I'll try to think up some plan. But

I must confess I don't see any way out," and Mark rested his elbows on his knees, and putting his face in his hands, thought upon his perilous situation.

"Jist you don't worrit," said Jakey. "Some pin 'll turn up, sho."

"Well, go out into the sunlight ; don't stay here. If they sentence me to hang I'll try to get them to send you home."

X.

THE RED SILK HANDKERCHIEF.

GREATNESS underlying an uninviting exterior is often called out by circumstances. President Lincoln would not have been the "Great Emancipator," had he not been born in the nick of time. General Grant would not have become prominent as a soldier, had the civil war occurred before or after he was a fit age to lead the Union armies; and Jakey Slack—well, Jakey would not have developed his ability as a strategist, had it not been for his friend Mark Malone and the negro jail at Chattanooga.

Jakey was as incompetent to sit down and think out a plan for his friend's escape as he was to demonstrate a proposition of Euclid. He could neither add columns of two figures nor spell words of one syllable; indeed, he could neither read, write, nor cypher; the want of an ability to read or write being a great disadvantage to him in his present responsible position. But the desire to help his friend out of a bad fix having got into his

brain, from the nature of the case, it simmered there, and then boiled a little, and simmered and boiled again. Like most people of genius, Jakey was unconscious of his own powers; but there was one person in whom, next to Mark, he had great confidence; that was his sister Souri. Then came the thought that if Souri were only there, "she mought do a heap." This led Jakey up to the problem, how to get her there. The problem was too difficult for his young brain to solve, so he got no further, until circumstances came to his aid; or may he not have had the germs of reason within him to go further without being definitely conscious of them.

When he left Mark he went out into the jail yard and began to stroll about with his hands in his pockets. To a casual observer he was simply a boy with no playmates, who did not know what to do with himself. If any one had been near him he would have seen his little eyes continually watching for some means of communication with the outside world. Occasionally he would wander near the fence, first casting a sly glance at the jail. There were cracks between the boards, and Jakey was looking out for a good wide crack to spy through. At last he found a place to suit him and hovered about it listening for a footstep,

and occasionally getting a quick glance through the opening by putting his eye to it. But Jakey knew well that if caught at this he would be called into the jail and forced to stay there; so he preferred to rely on his sense of hearing rather than on his sense of sight.

The jail was in an unfrequented place, and he was not soon rewarded. A man went by, but he was too far. Then another man; but Jakey studied his face and let him go without stopping him. At last an old negro woman passed with a basket on her arm, smoking a short clay pipe.

"Auntie!" called the boy.

"Lawd a massy! is de angel ob de Lawd speaken to his saryent from de clouds?" said the old woman, starting and dropping her basket.

"Auntie! hyar at the crack."

"Who is yo' callen? Yo' mus' be a chile from yo' voice."

"Put yer eye close up to de fence and y' can see me; at the crack."

The woman drew near and put her eye to the crack. Jakey stood off a little way and she could see him plainly. Meanwhile he pretended to have lost something on the ground.

"Why bress my po' ole heart, Honey, ef y' ain't nothen but a leetle boy in de jail yard.

'T'ought t' be 'nuf to keep dem po' misable po' white East Tennessans dar what dey had in de cellar wid-out keepen a chile."

"My brother's a prisoner 'n so air I," said Jakey, in a melancholy voice.

"Climb ober de fence, Honey, and run away."

"The fence air too high and I ain't a goen fur to leave my brother anyway. See hyar, aunty, are you niggers Union or Secesh?"

"Why, Honey, do you tink we turn agin ou own folks? Ain't de Yankee sojers comen down fur to gib us liberation?"

"Ef y' c'd save a Union sojer from a hangen w'd y' do it?"

"Fo' de Lawd, I would!"

"Then send this hanshicuf to Souri Slack."

"Who Souri Slack?"

"She's my sister; she lives at Farmer Slack's."

"Whar dat?"

"On the Anderson road, close onter the Sequatchie River."

While this conversation was going on, Jakey continued his efforts to find something at his feet. He picked up a stone, rolled it in the handkerchief and threw them over the fence.

"What good dat do?" asked the colored woman, picking up the missile of war.

"When Souri git's it she'll know."

"Will dat sabe de Union sojer's neck?"

"Mebbe 't mought, 'n mebbe 't mought n't."

"I cain't go myself. I'm too ole. But I'll start hit along. Reckon de darkies 'll tote it."

She picked up her basket and was moving away when Jakey called to her.

"Auntie!"

"What, Honey?"

"Yer mought git some un to tote hit ter an old nigger named Jefferson Randolph, ez lives up a creek 'bout five mile from hyar, near the pike runnen that-a-way. Mebbe he'll pass hit on."

"Sho' nuff."

"Yo' boy thar!"

The jailor's wife was standing in an open window regarding Jakey severely.

"Come away from that ar fence!"

Jakey skipped along toward her, doing a little waltzing as he went.

"Ef that ar boy wasn't sich a chile, I'd think he'd been up to somepen."

"What war yer a doen by that ar fence?" she asked when he came up.

"Nuthen."

"What war that yer throwed over?"

"Oh, I war only throwen stones."

"What yer throwen stones that-a-way fur?"

"Fur fun."

"Well yer just keep away from th' fence er y' shan't play in th' yard at all. I'll shet y' up with that big brother o' yourn."

"Wal, I won't go thar no more." And Jakey took a top out of his trouser's pocket and began plugging imaginary tops on the ground.

Mark hoped that the preparations the Confederates were making for the expected move would cause them to forget him. He was not destined to be so fortunate. The second day after his capture he was taken before a court martial held in a house occupied by the staff department, to be tried on the charge of being a spy.

The court was assembled and ready to proceed with the case. An officer had been detailed to defend the prisoner, but he had not arrived, and the court waited. Presently a clatter of horse's hoofs was heard outside. It stopped before the door of the house, and in another moment Mark's counsel entered the room.

Mark looked at him with astonishment. In the tall, straight soldier, with black hair and eyes, mustache and goatee, bearing about him that something which indicates "to the manor born," he recognized the officer who had called at the Fains' on the morning he had left them—Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh.

As soon as he entered, he beckoned the prisoner to follow him to a corner of the room apart from the others for consultation. It was not a convenient place for such an important interview, but one charged with being a spy was not likely to get many favors, and the exigencies of the case did not admit of aught except the bare forms of justice.

"Will you give me your confidence, my man, or shall I proceed at random?"

"At random."

"If you think it best to trust me, I give you the word of a Virginia gentleman, that I will not betray you, and I will do all I can for you. I am a Fitz Hugh."

He said this unconscious of how it would sound to a Northerner. To him, to be a Fitz Hugh was to be incapable of a dishonorable act. Mark understood him perfectly; indeed, his counsel inspired him with every confidence.

"I would explain everything to you, Captain, but my secret is not all my own. I would be perfectly willing to trust my fate in your hands if I could honorably do so. You will doubtless fail in your defense, but I thank you for the effort you will make."

The trial was of brief duration. The soldiers in whose company Mark was taken were

called and testified to his having masqueraded as a staff officer. Knowing now that he was probably a Union spy they would have shielded him, but they had already given up the secret. Mark was asked where he lived. He had entered his name at the hotel as coming from Jasper, so he gave that place as his residence ; but when asked what county Jasper was in he could not tell. The maps he had studied being military maps did not give the counties. Then some Tennessee soldiers were brought in—the town swarmed with them—who testified that they lived at Jasper and had never seen the prisoner there. The closing evidence against Mark was given by the recruiting officer with whom he had promised to enlist. Hearing that a spy had been taken, and suspecting it might be his promised recruit, he went to the court-room and there recognized the prisoner. His testimony was sufficient. The court had made up its mind before the prisoner's counsel had said a word.

Captain Fitz Hugh seemed distressed at not being able to bring forth any evidence in behalf of the prisoner. When he arose to speak in Mark's defense, the court listened to him with marked attention and respect ; indeed they were as favorably impressed with the accused's counsel as they were unfavorably dis-

posed toward the accused. The captain was obliged to content himself with warning the court against convicting a man of being a spy because his identity was not satisfactorily explained and on circumstantial evidence. He asked that the prisoner might have more time than had been given him in which to gather evidence in his behalf.

The court denied this request and proceeded with a verdict. In forty minutes after Mark entered the court-room he was found guilty of being a spy.

"Have you anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be passed upon you?"

"No, sir."

Captain Fitz Hugh interposed once more for delay.

"I would suggest," he said, "that inasmuch as some explanation may come to hand bearing on the case, the court fix my client's punishment to take place on a day not nearer than a week from to-day."

"I had intended to fix it for to-morrow morning at sunrise," said the president, "but in deference to the wishes of the prisoner's counsel, I will compromise with him midway between a week, as he desires, and to-morrow, or allowing three days. The sentence of the court is that the prisoner be hanged by the

neck until he is dead, on the 27th day of August, 1862, or three days from to-day."

Before Mark was led out of the court-room, his counsel approached him. Considering the prejudice against the prisoner, another man would have suffered him to go without a word. Not so Captain Fitz Hugh. He strode up to Mark, the officers and soldiers present making a way for him, leaving him alone with the prisoner by withdrawing to another part of the room, and extended his hand.

"One thing is plain to me," he said, "whoever you are, you are a gentleman, and I believe you have sacrificed your life to your sense of duty. I am sorry that you did not trust me with your secret. Then I might have done something for you. As it is, I have done nothing."

"It would have availed nothing," said Mark. "You have done all you could under any circumstances. Besides, had I told you who I am, you might have felt it your bounden duty to your cause to make known the facts."

"Never!" said Fitz Hugh proudly. "I owe more to myself, more to my sense of honor, more to my birth and breeding, more even to my State, than to the Confederacy."

"Captain Fitz Hugh," said Mark, with a voice in which there was a slight tremble,

“you are of too fine grain. You are too frank, too truthful. Do not feel a moment’s regret at not having been able to save me. Mine is but one of thousands of lives that must go out in this great struggle for human liberty. Mine is an ordinary nature. You are fitted for nobler work than war. I trust you will be spared to become an honor to your State and a reunited country. From the bottom of my heart I thank you.”

The men clasped hands and Mark was led away between two soldiers.

XI.

DE CAUSE OB FREDUM.

ON the morning after Jakey's interview with the colored woman through the crack in the jail-yard fence, Souri Slack was washing dishes by an open window in the kitchen, an addition built of pine boards to one of the united houses which formed the Slack dwelling. The sun was shining brightly, and a morning-glory she had trained up to grow about the window was fresh with dew. Souri's heart felt unusually light. The air was so fresh ; the sun was so bright ; the morning-glory flowers had such a companionable look in them that Souri was very happy.

Suddenly there came to her a quick sinking away from the pleasurable sensation. A sense of danger rushed in to take its place. Surely something horrible was about to happen.

In a moment she heard the clatter of horse's hoofs, coming at a gallop. Looking up the road, of which she had a view from the window, she saw a horse covered with foam tearing toward her with a negro boy on his bare back. In a moment the rider was at the fence and

had reined in his horse. Wild with haste and excitement, seeing Souri at the window, he called :

"Am dis Slack's place?"

"Yas."

"Whar Souri Slack?"

"Hyar."

"You?"

"Yas."

The boy held up a red handkerchief, and then jumping off his horse, threw the reins over a picket in the fence, which he vaulted, and running up to the window, poked the handkerchief at her. Souri at once recognized the handkerchief she had given Mark. Sewed on to a corner she noticed a piece of dirty cotton cloth on which some one had written with a pen in blotted letters :

*Souri Slack
Farmer Slack on de
Anderson rode nigh. Seppahy ribbon.
De Cause de freedom.*

"Whar d' yo git this?" asked Souri, her face white as ashes.

"Dunno. Left wid de niggers at Mr. Torbut's plantation. I'se Mr. Torbut's nigger."

"Who tole yer ter tote hit hyar?"

"Ole nigger what leabe hit."

"What d' he say?"

"Nuffen." And the boy pointed to the corner, as if that was sufficient explanation for any one.

Souri could not read what was written there, but she knew Mark had been captured, and it was fair to suppose that he was at or near Chattanooga.

"Wal," she said, "you niggers hev passed this ter me; reckon yer ken pass me back; I'll go 'th y'. Air y' hungry?"

"I's rid since one o'clock dis mawnin'."

"Wal, take yer horse round ter the barn fur a feed, and then come in hyar."

The darky showed his white teeth and did as he was bidden. When he came in, Souri placed something to eat before him, and then went in to inform her mother of what had happened.

"Maw," she said, "Jakey's tuk."

"La sakes!" exclaimed the mother with a scream. "Air they goen ter hang him?"

"Don't know. The sojer's tuk too. Reckon they'll hang *him*, sartin'."

"How d' yer know?"

Souri told her about giving Mark the handkerchief and its return "In de cause ob fredum."

"What shall we do?" moaned the mother, rocking in concert with her feelings.

"I'm goen ter Chattanooga ter find out."

"They'll hang you too," whined Mrs. Slack.

"Reckon not. I mought find a way ter git Jakey outen jail."

"'N th' sojer too?"

"Mebbe."

"Air y' goen jest's y' air?"

Souri thought a while without replying. She would go with the colored boy, of course. He could show her the way, and she might pass for some relative. But that would not do. She was white and the boy was black. Why not darken her face? The idea was a good one.

"Maw," she said, "I'm agoen out ter find some berries to make me a merlatter," and before her mother could reply, she was off. When she returned, the negro boy had finished his breakfast. She told him that she would be ready to go back with him in half an hour. While she was talking to him he fell asleep. Then she thought it would be better to let him sleep all day and travel at night. Time would be lost, but there would be less liability to interruption, so she aroused him with difficulty, and conducted him to an old sofa, where he at once dropped off again into slumberland.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when Souri awakened the boy. Seeing a mulatto girl standing by him in an old calico dress and a sun bonnet on her head, he was astonished.

"Who yo'?" he asked.

"Don't you know me?"

"Sho' 'nuff!"

"What's yer name?"

"Julius."

"What's yer tother name?"

"Ain't got none!"

"I'm goen with yer t' where y' started from. Then I reckon I'll have ter go on alone."

"Ole man dar; he tote y' funder."

"Wal, come along. Eat a snack 'n then we'll go."

When Julius had eaten his fill, they mounted the horse, the girl sitting straddle behind him. Souri, in a common calico dress and a very large sun bonnet, looked for all the world like a negro girl. Julius took her over hills innumerable; and at midnight drew rein near a large plantation. There they both got down, and Julius, who had surreptitiously taken one of his master's horses, returned it to the stable. Then he led the way to a row of negro cabins. Going to one of them he knocked on the door. It was opened by the negro with whom Mark

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and Jakey had stayed on the creek between the Fains' and Chattanooga.

"Dis de gal," said Julius.

"Goen to Chattanooga?" asked the old man.

"Reckon."

"I show yo' de way. Go righ' off?"

"Yas."

"Hab t' foot hit. Ain't got no horse."

"I can do hit."

The negro was evidently ready and expecting them, for without going back into the cabin he led the way eastward.

Souri tramped in his company the rest of the night, and at daybreak they were at his cabin on the creek. There she took a few hours' rest, and after the sun was up, ate a breakfast which the old man prepared for her. After this he set out to show her the way to Chattanooga. He asked no questions. All he knew was that his efforts were in "de cause ob fredum," and that was quite enough. The old woman who had brought him the handkerchief had told him where her cabin was in Chattanooga, and he seemed to understand that he was to guide Souri there. She gave him some information as to a man and a boy at the jail in Chattanooga. This was all he knew.

They crossed the river by the regular ferry,

having no trouble in doing so, for citizens and negroes were passing all the while. About ten o'clock in the morning they reached the cabin of the old negress who had started the handkerchief.

"Fo' de Lo'd!" exclaimed the woman. "How'd yo' git hyar so quick?"

"Trabel all night," said the pilot.

"Who dat yaller gal?"

"I'm Souri Slack. Whar's the jail?"

The woman led Souri out to show her the way, and the man left the cabin on his way homeward. Souri was taken to a place where she could see the jail, and the woman told her where to find the crack through which Jakey had conversed with her.

Souri went to the place alone, and going to the fence hunted till she found the crack. She peeped in, hoping to see her brother, but Jakey was not there. She waited an hour or more, but he did not appear.

"Reckon I'm wastin' time hyar," she said at last. "I'm goen right in ter git round th' ole woman, ef there is one." And she went to the gate and presented herself before the sentinel.

"What d' y' want?" he asked.

Souri didn't know whether the jailer had a wife or not, but she hazarded the reply:

“De jailer’s wife tole me to come in ’n tote de washen.”

The soldier looked at her doubtfully, but suffered her to pass in.

She had scarcely entered before she saw a party of soldiers conducting a man from the jail. They passed near her and she recognized Mark. He was going to his trial. He did not recognize her, darkened as she was, and she was too wise to make herself known. Jakey followed his friend and was going to pass out with him, but was stopped by the guard.

Souri saw tears trickling down the boy’s cheeks as he went back and strolled about in the yard. She longed to take him in her arms, but did not dare to even make herself known to him. She did not know where Mark was being taken, so going back to the guard she asked with apparent idle curiosity:

“Whar dey goen wid dat man?”

“Reckon thur goen ter try him.”

XII.

A WILLING SERVANT.

SOURI determined to attempt to get service with the jailer's wife. She hoped that she might be received with less suspicion while the prisoner was away. Besides, she must communicate with her brother as soon as possible.

She went into the jail and found a woman, whose hair was streaked with gray, sweltering over a cooking stove.

"Y' ain't got no washen, ner nuffin fur me, hab y'?" said Souri, suddenly appearing before her.

"No! git out o' hyar."

"Any cooken?"

"Cooken. Can yer cook? I don't want no nigger ter cook fur me, but there's niggers in the 'black hole,' I wish I had some un ter cook fur."

"I'll cook fur 'em."

"Who owns y'?"

"I's a free nigger."

"Wal, I ain't got no money ter pay fur a cook and I reckon I'll heve to sweat it out. Git 'long."

"I don't want nuffin but somp'n ter eat. I can sleep at my aunt's, ober de hill."

"Wal, take hold hyar fur a spell. I'm boil-en." And she drew away from the stove and mopped her face.

Souri took hold and showed a pleasing aptitude at baking corn bread and boiling some coarse meat which simmered in a pot on the stove.

Presently the jailer came in, and taking some of the food, lifted a trap-door, and lowered a meal to those below in the black hole.

"Hyar's a gal," said his wife, "ez hankers ter do some cooken fur me."

"Ain't got nothen ter pay with."

"Don't won't no pay," said Souri, "I's starven. Want somp'n tereat."

"Wal, yer won't git much hyar," said the jailer, "but I reckon it's good enuff fur niggers."

So Souri was allowed to help, but there was no understanding that her services should extend beyond the present moment.

She was leaning over the stove when Mark was brought back. He had just been sentenced, and there was a haggard, hopeless look on his face, as he passed the girl without noticing her. He was put in his room and it was hard for Souri to keep from following to

tell him of her coming. Jakey came in with the party and went with Mark into his room.

In the afternoon Souri saw that she must make work for herself, or there would be no excuse for her to stay about the place. So without saying a word she took a pail of water and a scrubbing brush and began to scrub the floor. Then she suggested to Mrs. Triggs that she sweep her bedroom. The woman concluded that, as it had not been swept for more than a month, Souri "mought's well" do it, especially as the girl seemed to be willing to do all this work for a little boiled meat and corn bread.

"Yo' don' look right smart, Miss Triggs," said Souri, after cooking the supper and eating her share, "'n I don' know whar I gwine t' git any breakfast less I come 'n cook fur y'."

Mrs. Triggs succeeded in getting her husband's consent to Souri coming back in the morning, and the man went out to the gate with her and told her if the guard did not pass her in to send for him.

She was at the jail bright and early and got in on telling the sentinel that she was Mrs. Trigg's servant. She cooked the breakfast, and when she saw Triggs about to carry Mark's meat and corn bread in to him she offered to

do it, but Triggs paid no attention to the offer and carried it in himself.

Then she asked Mrs. Triggs when she did her washing, and as the old woman had no regular time and not many clothes, Souri offered to do what there was. When she went out to hang up the clothes to dry Jakey was in the yard. She called him to her and in a whisper made herself known. Jakey, who was wondering what had become of the message he had sent was both overjoyed and astonished. He turned two or three summersaults on the ground, and otherwise demonstrated his childishness to Mrs. Triggs, who at that moment appeared at a window, but not before Souri had told Jakey to inform Mark of her presence, and that she would try to get into his room as soon as she could be intrusted with a meal for him.

Again at noon she offered to take in his dinner but without success. She was at her wits' ends for an excuse to stay about till supper time, but thinking that Mrs. Trigg's wardrobe might need mending she offered to undertake the task, and spent the afternoon over the old woman's threadbare garments.

All this while Souri was thinking of a plan for Mark's escape. She learned that he was to be hanged in a few days, and knew there was

little time. The most natural plan under the circumstances occurred to her,—a plan by which more prisoners have made their escape than any other one method,—walking out before the guard in women's clothes. Souri determined, if she could secure an entrance into Mark's room at any time after dark, she would give him her dress and sun bonnet and leave him to make an attempt. Then she began to think over a plan to gain an entrance at a specified time.

In the evening her patience was rewarded. Mark's supper was standing on the stove. Triggs was not in the jail and Mrs. Triggs went down the stairs outside to get something she wanted in the yard.

Souri caught up the supper and walked straight past the guard into Mark's room with it. Mark, who had been informed of her coming by Jakey, was expecting her. When he saw the mulatto girl he grasped her hand.

"Souri! God bless you!" he said in a low tone.

"I ain't got no time ter talk. I'm watchin' fur a chance ter give yer my clothes ter go out with."

"But what would you and Jakey do?" he asked hurriedly.

"Th' ain't goen ter hang a boy or a gal.

Pertend ter be sick ter-morrer 'n ask fur some medicine. Mebbe they'll send me ter git it."

With that she went out. When Mrs. Triggs came in she was bending over the stove.

"Whar's the Yank's supper?" she asked.

"Oh, 'twar gitten cold 'n I toted hit in ter him."

Souri made herself so useful that she was permitted to stay about the jail the next day. She managed to keep an indifferent mien to all about her, but within there was a tempest. The next morning Mark was to swing, and preparations were being made for the purpose. "If there war only time," thought Souri, "I mought help him away, but to-morrer!" and no one being near to see her she wrung her hands. There seemed but little chance that, having only one evening to effect her plans, she would succeed. It could only be by good luck.

In the afternoon Mark began to moan. Triggs went in to see him and asked what was the matter. Mark told him that he was ill. As the afternoon wore away the prisoner groaned and moaned till Triggs went back to him, and Mark told him that he thought he was going to die. Mrs. Triggs carried in his supper, but he refused to eat.

"What yer got?" she asked.

"Cholera, I reckon."

"Good Lord !"

"I want some medicine," said Mark. "If you'll send the black girl for it I'll pay you and her well."

"Y' ain't got no money."

"Yes, I have, but you don't know whar it is."

Mrs. Triggs reported the matter to her husband, who, fearing that the prisoner would not be in condition for the hanging which was to occur the next morning, consented. Mark was furnished with a scrap of paper and a pen and wrote the name of a mixture he remembered for cholera morbus. Triggs told Souri to warn the druggist not to send poison, for he feared Mark might be intending to make way with himself to escape the gallows. She was furnished with money extracted from Jakey's boot, and hurried to town.

When she came back it was quite dark. Only a faint line of light was left in the west. As she entered she met Triggs going out of the gate. She quickly mounted the staircase with her heart in her throat. As soon as she entered the building she saw that Mrs. Triggs was not there; she was in her room. Souri went on tiptoe to Mrs. Triggs' door and looked in. The woman was sitting on a chair by the window, waiting her return. Souri went as

quickly as she could go without being heard to the prisoner's room.

"Medicine," she said to the guard, and passed in without waiting permission, leaving the door partly closed behind her.

"Here, quick! A burnt cork. Rub 't on yer face," she whispered.

Mark seized the cork and applied it. Souri stood in the corner with her back to him, and taking off her dress threw it to him. Mark took off his outer clothes and threw them to her. Each put on the other's garments, Mark inclosing his head in the sun bonnet.

Looking the gratitude he did not dare to speak; pressing her hand and carrying it to his lips, Mark passed out.

The guard wondered why Souri looked so tall and strapping.

Going out of the door and down the stairs Mark went to the gate, and walked by the sentinel posted there, as Souri had often done.

The guard also noticed how tall she looked, and called to her; but by this time Mark was well out of his reach and pretended not to hear. The sentinel, not thinking it worth while to follow and leave his post unprotected, let him go and thought no more about the matter.

XIII.

FLOATING FOR LIFE.

MARK had very little idea how long a time would elapse before it would be discovered that Souri was in his place and he had escaped. It might be a few minutes : it might be half an hour ; it might possibly be not till morning ; though of this he had little hope. He believed that within half an hour he would be pursued, and as he was well acquainted with the methods in vogue in the South at the time, he knew he would be traced by bloodhounds.

He had been about the town enough to know the direction of the river, and started toward it. During the day he had thought over what he would do in case Souri's ruse should be successful, and made up his mind that any delay in getting across the river would be fatal. He was at home in the water, and determined that he would not attempt to find a boat, but would plunge in and swim for his life. The width of the river at Chattanooga was only about three-quarters of a mile, and Mark did not regard this a great distance for a good swimmer. Once across, the dogs would

have to pick up the scent on the other side, and if he should permit the current to carry him far down the stream, the difficulty in doing so would be greatly increased.

Though Mark had been in prison but a few days, the transition from duress to freedom was very grateful. It was a soft summer evening and the larger stars had already begun to shine. Casting a glance to the right he saw a streak of light over Missionary Ridge, and knew that before long he would be at a disadvantage from the rising of a full moon. He walked briskly whenever any person was in sight, and when he thought that he was unobserved he ran. When he first left the jail yard his heart was in his throat. His agitation diminished as he proceeded, and in five minutes he had come down like one in a race to a concentration of all his faculties—a gathering of all his forces for the struggle between life and death before him. With these well in hand, the dreaded scene of the morrow acted as a tremendous and effective stimulant.

No one of the few people who passed the strapping negro girl, whose face was hidden within the blue check sun bonnet, dreamed that a Union soldier was passing; that the scaffold was being cheated; that a messenger with the secret of one of the most important moves any

Confederate general had made or was destined to make during the war was on his way North, in the person of the negro woman hurrying on toward the river. And it was fortunate for the flying soldier they did not, or he would never even have got half a mile from the jail.

He sped onward, running and walking briskly alternately, till he came to a place where a board fence was capped by a narrow strip. He mounted it and walked as far as the fence extended, perhaps a hundred yards, hoping by this means to throw the dogs off the scent for a few minutes and thus gain a little time. Then he jumped down and hurried forward. A man passed and called to him; but he paid no attention to the call, and the man stood looking after him, doubtless suspecting that the girl was a runaway slave.

At last the grateful sight of the river met his gaze. It cheered him, and seemed to beckon him on to rest upon its bosom, or, as an alternative with the dreadful tragedy of the morning, to find oblivion beneath its surface. Between the river before him, and the jail, the dogs, the gibbet, for a time his feelings of hope and fear neutralized each other and left his faculties free to act with perfect coolness.

He stood for a moment beneath a low clump of trees on the bank, listening and looking up

and down the river. A boat was passing and he felt it necessary to wait for it to go by. He lost five minutes, but it seemed half an hour. Then taking off his dress, and shoes, and bonnet, he put the dress and the shoes in the bonnet and tied the strings around his neck, resting the bundle on his back. Going down to the margin, and again listening a moment to make sure he was not observed, he waded out as far as he could touch bottom and then began to swim.

As it was midsummer, he had expected to find the water warm. His expectations were realized to a reasonable degree, and he felt that he could remain in it a long while without being chilled. His plan was to drift down a considerable distance. He might be expected to swim across as rapidly as he could, and the current, in this case, would land him perhaps a mile below the town. Those who would follow him with dogs would doubtless track him to the river margin, then take the dogs across and endeavor to pick up the scent some distance below on the other side. Mark had weighed all these circumstances, and determined to drift down as far as possible, land at the mouth of a creek if he could find one, enter it, and swim or walk up it in the water, thus rendering it difficult for the dogs to track him.

He swam slowly till he reached the middle of the river, then floating with scarcely any motion of his hands and feet, he permitted himself to drift down with the current. A favorite way with him, when a boy, of resting in the water, had been to float on his back. Unmindful of the wetting he would give the clothes tied around his neck, he turned over and drifted with his arms spread beside him, his eyes turned directly to the sky.

It may seem singular that a man who was being carried from so dreadful a death should have thought of anything else. But Mark did not want to think of it. He had never been unnerved except after his sentence, with an almost certain execution before him, and felt it best to let his mind drift into other channels. Then, danger is not, and was not especially with Mark, to be compared with certain destruction. The soldier on the field of battle is a different man from one who awaits the bullets of a file of soldiers, drawn up in line to take his life deliberately. Mark was a changed man from the moment he got into the river, for he then felt that he had a chance for his life.

In the position on his back he could only look upward at the stars. There was the great dome above him spangled with myriads of bright points and spanned by the "milky way."

He had always been fond of the stars, and in order to divert his mind, picked out some of his favorites, and traced a few constellations with which he was familiar. In this way he diverted his mind until his nerves became quite steady.

His observations were suddenly checked by a sound. It was very faint, but enough to freeze the marrow in his bones. It was the distant bark of a dog. He listened and presently could hear more. Evidently there were a pack. They drew nearer. Then they ceased for a while. Perhaps they had come to the place where he had walked on the fence. Then the barks began again, growing only slightly louder as they came, for Mark was floating rapidly from the point where he had entered the river.

He involuntarily turned over on his chest and struck out lustily. The current was swift; swimming would not add to his safety; it would only tax his strength and render him more liable to recapture on the other shore. But swim he must. With the terrible sound of those dogs in his ears he could not lie idly on the water and leave the current to bear him onward.

Soon there came another cessation of sound from the dogs far above on the shore, and

Mark judged that they had lost the scent at the place where he had entered the water.

Then he began to think of Souri and Jakey. What had they done to Souri when they had discovered her trick? Would they punish her? Would they treat the boy harshly? He was comforted with the thought that there would be nothing gained by this; it would not bring the prisoner back; but he muttered a prayer for the girl who had placed herself behind those prison bars, who had incurred the rage of his jailers to save him.

He heard no more of the dogs, and floated on, swimming and resting alternately. The high bluffs of Moccasin Point were before him on his right. An owl on their summit, watching the rising moon, occasionally gave a dismal hoot, the intervals being supplied by the melancholy whippoorwill. The current bore him on around the point, carrying him in near the shore where he had passed the picket with the sleeping Jakey in his arms, a few nights before. So close was he that he could see a man walking back and forth on the very beat of the one he had passed. As he drifted away he saw the relief approach and the picket changed.

He was borne directly under Lookout Mountain, and on down for a mile, to a point where the river makes another bend. Here the bank

was low, and as Mark was getting chilled, he swam to the southern bank for a rest. He laid himself down for a few moments on the dry ground, and then getting up, walked back and forth rapidly, swinging his arms at the same time, to restore circulation and fit him to endure a longer stay in the water. He looked about for some piece of wood on which he might float further. There were logs of various sizes scattered around, but most of them were rotten. He was so much at home in the water that he was not disappointed on failing to find one suitable to his purpose.

Plunging in again he moved on down past the bluffs at the foot of the Racoon Mountains, swimming on his chest most of the time, and keeping a lookout before him. He had not passed any boats, at least none near him, and did not fear this danger, but he wanted to keep his surroundings well in view in order to know his location. The moon was now well up, and he could see quite distinctly. Below and to his right a boat was putting out from the east shore. It was larger than an ordinary skiff, but as it was in a shadow he could not tell what kind of a craft it was. As it came over the river at right angles with the shore and Mark was drifting toward it, he soon found that he was in danger of meeting it in

the middle of the stream. The current was quite rapid, and before he was aware of it he was close on to the boat. It was evidently a ferry-boat, and Mark, who knew the location of Brown's Ferry from the maps, judged that it was the boat belonging there.

But Mark was concerned with other considerations besides his location just then. He was too late to get out of the way unobserved by swimming aside. He made up his mind in a twinkling what to do. Drawing several long breaths he filled his lungs with air, and then putting his head down and his feet up he threw himself under water. He had often been beneath the surface for a considerable time, but never as long as now. He remained under as long as he thought he possibly could, and then stayed a while longer. When he came to light again, the boat was a hundred yards above him and to the west of him.

Another mile brought him to an island. He remembered it on his map as William's Island, and knew that it was about two miles long. He recalled the fact that the only creek flowing into the river in this vicinity entered it midway between the north and south end of this island, and on his right, if he remembered aright. He had about a mile to go to reach the mouth of this creek.

Striking out he directed his course to the eastward of the island, and swam very near to the east bank of the river. Along this he floated with scarcely a stroke except to keep in close to the shore, watching eagerly for the mouth of the creek. Fortunately when he reached it he discovered it, and where he had supposed he would find it. With a few lusty strokes he was in it and soon at a place where he could rest in the water with his feet on *terra firma*.

But the knowledge that the dogs would soon be upon him prevented a rest of long duration. Perhaps a party would cross the neck of Moccasin Point, thus cutting off a greater part of the long distance over which he had floated. The thought added new terror, and he began to wade and to swim alternately, as was necessary, up the creek. Presently he came to the crossing of a road. He drew himself up on to it and looked around. As a scout he had long been accustomed to keep his mind fixed on points along the paths he traveled, in order that he might know them again. As soon as he saw the little bridge—if it could be called a bridge—he knew that he was on the Chattanooga pike, over which he had passed a few days before, and at the junction of the creek running near the Fains' plantation.

Mark had not considered what he would do in case he should succeed in getting safely across the river. While in jail, he felt that once out and across the Tennessee, he would feel assured of safety. Now this had been accomplished, he began to realize that but half the battle had been won. Indeed, there were more chances that he would be retaken than that he would ever reach the Union lines.

He wrung the water from his clothes and put them on, shielding his face with his sun-bonnet; for though he had no mirror to inspect his features, he fancied they must be streaked with burnt cork softened by water. Then setting out toward the Fain plantation, he deliberated what he should do.

It was now between eleven and twelve o'clock—so Mark judged by the moon being nearly on the meridian—and he knew that all the Fains were asleep. He reached the corner of the yard and was about to enter it when he heard a clattering of hoofs behind him. He had hardly time to vault the fence and crouch behind it when a troop of horsemen crossed the bridge over the creek. They drew rein on the hither side, not a hundred yards away from him. Mark heard a voice:

“Lieutenant, take ten men and scour the

bank of the river from this on to the next creek, where I will make another detail."

The lieutenant, with his men, broke away from the column, which moved forward, passing within fifty feet of where Mark lay crouching.

Mark was for a few moments so completely overcome by the narrowness of his escape that he seemed to have no power to move. If he had been five minutes later, his capture would have been almost certain; for they would likely have discovered him between the road and the river, which space they were evidently intending to scour.

He got up, and getting on the outside of the fence, walked beside a portion of it which led back from the road, designing to enter the negro quarters in the rear. He feared that dogs were loose in the yard and that he would have trouble with them; he therefore stole along till he came to the nearest point to one of the negro cabins. A dog sleeping in the moonlight near the house gave a low moan. Mark paused a moment and listened; then entering the grounds he walked in a stooping posture, keeping one of the cabins between him and the dog. He wanted to reach the rear door.

Mark felt assured that unless he could be concealed in some place where searchers would not be likely to intrude, he would be lost. He

well knew that every foot of ground within five or ten miles of Chattanooga would be alive with people hunting for him. The negro cabins would not be safe, for no searching party would respect them. There was but one chance for him; he must effect an entrance into the Fain house; and that with the knowledge, as to his true character, of but one person—Laura Fain.

He reached the negro cabin and knocked.

"Who dar?"

"Whar Uncle Dan'l sleep?"

"Nex to de lef."

Mark went as directed and called up Uncle Daniel. He heard a movement as of some one getting up, and presently the old man stood at the open door.

"Uncle, I'se got a message fo' yo' young mistress."

"Who from?"

"De po' white man what war hyar las' week wid he leetle brudder."

"Nice man, dat; hab he got in trouble?"

"Nebber mine dat, uncle; go in de house 'n wake up Missie Laura."

"Ain't got no key."

"Cain't yo' wake up some one inside?"

"Why don' yo' wait till mornen?"

"Cain't do dat no how. De message mus' be giben at once."

"Wal," said Dan'l at last, "I do what I can fo' dat man ; he berry fine gentleman ef he *war* po' white."

Mark followed the old man to the rear door of the basement. On the way a huge dog bounded at them, but seeing Daniel, his fierceness ended in play. Daniel succeeded in waking a negro woman who slept within ; the door was opened and they stepped inside.

"Go tell Missie Laura a culled gal want to speak to her right off. Say she got message from de man what war hyar wid he leetle brudder," said Daniel.

"At dis time o' night?"

"Yas ; de message muss be delibered right away," said Mark. "Don' wake no one but Missie Laura. Tread softly."

The woman lighted a candle, and went off with it grumbling, leaving Mark and Daniel in the dark. They waited for perhaps ten minutes, when they heard steps and saw the light returning. The negro woman was followed by Laura Fain, dressed in a wrapper. She knew Mark from the moment she saw him, but pretended only to see a negro girl.

"Hab message fur yo', Missie Laura, but cain't tell it to yo' widout dese niggers git away."

"Come with me."

She took the candle and led the way to the

dining-room above, leaving the two colored people below. Then she turned to Mark :

“ Why in heaven’s name did you come back here ? ”

“ It was a choice between life and death. I escaped this evening from Chattanooga, where I was to be hanged to-morrow morning. Every place of concealment on this side of the river will be entered and searched. If concealed in this house, occupied by a family of white people and Confederates, I may not be found. Otherwise my recapture is certain.”

She thought a moment, rubbing her palms together, as was her habit when excited. Then she called to the servants below :

“ Go to bed, Uncle Daniel, and you, too, Auntie. This girl is worn out with traveling, and I am going to fix a place for her to sleep.”

Then turning to Mark, she motioned him to follow her.

They went up two flights of stairs, stepping on tiptoe, and at last reached a landing from which a pair of steps led to a trap-door.

“ Go up there,” she whispered.

Mark climbed the stairs, pushed the trap open, and entered the inclosure of the roof. Before lowering the door, he looked back to whisper a “ God bless you,” but all was dark. Laura had gone.

XIV.

MARK'S KEEPER.

MARK stood for a moment looking about him. There were dormer windows which let in the moonlight so that he could distinctly see everything in the room. Some trunks were piled in one corner, and in another some furniture. Among the latter he noticed a lounge with threadbare upholstery, and taking it in his arms, carried it, treading softly, to one of the windows at the front of the house. The room was very hot, and he raised the sash, moving it with great care so as not to make any sound. Then he sat down on the lounge, and looking out of the window, began to meditate on his situation.

While thus engaged he heard a light tap at the trap-door. Opening it, he saw a bundle extended by the fair hand of his preserver. He took it and letting down the trap—Miss Fain did not utter a word—he unrolled it. There were complete suits of under and outer garments; the property of Miss Fain's brother.

The getting off of his damp garments and

donning snow-white linen was a grateful sensation to Mark. Having put on what he needed for the night he laid himself down on the lounge. From his window he could see the Tennessee rolling in the moonlight, half a mile away. He thought how much more comfortable he was in his dry clothes than he had been floating in the water. Then he heard the bark of hounds. They were on the water's edge, and he knew, by the sounds, that they were endeavoring to pick up the scent of his tracks.

"Bark on," he said. "When I leave this I'll take with me something to die with. I'll not be taken alive; and if I meet you, some of you shall roll over."

Then there came an inexpressible gratitude. He felt thankful to Souri, thankful to Jakey, thankful to Laura Fain, thankful to his God. There was something especially engaging in Miss Fain's efforts on his behalf, inasmuch as she regarded him an enemy to her country. He thought of Souri in prison, waiting for old Triggs to discover her deception. What would they do to her? And Jakey? Would they injure a mere boy? He vowed that if he should escape and outlive the war he would find out just what had happened; and if either had been harshly treated, he would have his revenge.

Musing he fell asleep, but he soon awoke.

It was past midnight. The day of his execution. He shuddered.

He tried to go to sleep again, but the dreadful fate which would have been his had not Soure saved him, and on the very last evening before his intended execution, got into his head, and he could not drive it out. And now, were not men and hounds hunting him for miles around, to drag him back to Chattanooga to that dreadful jail yard, the scaffold, the rope, the black cap?

And Laura Fain, suppose she should weaken; suppose she should, after all, consider it her duty to give him up. Suppose a demand should be made to search the house. Suppose—a thousand suppositions chased each other through his excited brain.

He lay tossing till just before dawn, when he again fell into a troubled slumber.

He was awakened by a squadron of cavalry passing along the road. The sun had not yet risen, but it was light. He could look right down on them, though they could not see him. They trotted along slowly, all looking worn and sleepy. They were evidently the men who had passed the night before and were going back from an unsuccessful hunt. Mark noticed the different positions many of them took in order to rest in their saddles. The

sight took him back to his own troop and he longed to be in the stirrups again with them.

There is no time like a wakeful night to magnify distress, and nothing like an unclouded rising sun to drive it away. Mark looked out on the stretch of country to be seen from his window—the Tennessee, and the mountains beyond, their tops tinged with yellow light—and was as unreasonably hopeful as he had been unreasonably despondent. His pleasurable sensations suddenly received a new check. An officer of the cavalry that had passed, followed by two men, came riding back. Maybe they were coming to the house. They stopped at the gate. One of the men rode forward, dismounted, and opened it. The officer entered and rode up to the front door.

Mark's heart seemed to stop beating.

He could not see what was going on below so close under his window, but presently heard the officer talking to some one on the veranda.

"A Federal spy escaped last night from Chattanooga, madam. He was in the disguise of a negro girl." There was something more which was unintelligible.

Then Mark heard the word "no" spoken in a voice which he thought was Mrs. Fain's.

"He was tracked to the river, which he must

have crossed. He probably landed a mile or two below Chattanooga, and we believe he is hiding somewhere within a few miles of this place."

"You are welcome to——" Mark could not hear what the officer was welcome to, but he surmised it was to search the house.

"What time did you go to bed?"

The reply was inaudible.

"You saw nothing till then?"

"No, sir."

"And everything was shut up at ten o'clock."

"Yes, sir."

"You are good Confederates, I reckon."

"Yes sir, my son——" Mark could not hear the rest, except the word "army."

"Well, with your permission, madam, we'll search——" The rest was lost. Indeed, Mark was too terror-stricken to listen with due care. He supposed the house would be ransacked.

In a moment his terror was turned to a delicious sense of relief. The officer, after calling to the men at the gate, rode around to the negro quarters.

But there was a danger in the search which would follow in the cabins. Daniel would remember the negro girl he had let in the night before, and would surmise that she was the

person the men were looking for. Would Daniel betray him? He thought not. Daniel gave no hint, for presently Mark saw the trio ride away to join the troop.

Laura Fain had spent a night no more comfortable than Mark. The responsibility of a human life weighed upon her heavily. At one moment she would picture Mark's face, pale, haggard, despairing, as he would be dragged from his hiding place. The next she was conscience-stricken at the part she was playing in shielding an enemy of her cause—the cause of her brother and her lover. She heard the dogs as Mark had heard them on the river bank, and lay shivering till the baying died away in the distance. Then in the morning she saw the cavalry go by, the officer come up and talk with her mother, whom he asked the negroes to call from her bed that he might question her about the presence of the spy. Laura got up herself and stood at the landing, listening breathless while they talked. When the man rode away she muttered a fervent "Thank God."

As the morning brightened and it was time to rise, her fears were less intense, and she began to think of how she should keep her prisoner concealed from the rest of the house-

hold. How should she feed him? When her maid came up she told her that she would take her breakfast in her room, but surprised the girl by the large quantity of food she wanted brought to her. When the breakfast came, Laura was up and dressed. She directed the girl to set it on a table and then sent her to the stable with a message to Daniel about her riding pony. Her maid having gone, Laura took up the breakfast and carried it to the trap.

In another moment she was standing on the ladder with the tray in her hand, half her body below and half in the attic, regarding a handsome fellow looking very much like a gentleman in her brother's clothes. He in turn was regarding what he considered a very pretty picture in the half-exposed figure of a young girl holding a tray in her hands on which he knew full well was a breakfast he was hungry for. Then he took the tray and laid it on the lounge.

It was the first time that Laura had seen Mark dressed becomingly. This was the man she had been instrumental in saving, the man she was protecting, the man she must exercise her wits to give an opportunity to get away to a land of safety from the halter. It was pleasant to see that he was good to look upon.

What a fine brow ; what a resolute mouth. Those locks are golden and fitted for a woman's head. The eyes are heavenly blue. And all this beauty holds a soul capable of plunging into the most frightful of dangers.

And this being, so dazzling to a young girl, scarcely twenty, was in her power. Could she not at a word give him over to an ignominious death? And could she not, by care, almost certainly insure his freedom? He was her slave, bound to her far more securely than Alice her maid, who had been given her by her father. She could order him to crawl on the floor before her, and he would have to do so. She had once seen a woman enter a cage of a lion with only a slender whip in her hand, and the huge beast had obeyed her slightest motion. Mark was her lion, and she felt inclined to give him just one touch of the whip to see what he would do. She stepped into the room and let down the trap.

"Miss Fain," Mark said, "you cannot have any conception of the fervor of my gratitude. You stand between me and death. Not the death of a soldier, but of a felon. And here," pointing to the breakfast, "you are ministering to my wants with your own hands."

"And yet I told you not to come here."

"I did not understand you so."

Mark was hurt. His heart was full of gratitude. He could not understand how, after doing and risking so much for him, she could blame him for throwing himself on her generosity.

"I am sorry that you regret your kindness," he added, with almost a tremble in his voice.

"I did not say that I regretted it."

"But you remind me that it is not agreeable to you."

"How can it be? You are a Yankee, a spy, and on a mission to discover the movements of our troops."

"Why, then, do you not give me up?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Can I turn executioner?"

"I see. I am indebted for my present safety to the fact that you do not care to do an unwomanly act."

"You must draw your own inference."

"But I should like to be grateful. How can I when you tell me that you do all this for me that your white hands may not have a stain upon them?"

"It is not necessary that you should feel grateful."

Mark studied her face for a moment earnestly. Then his manner changed.

"Miss Fain," he said, pointing, "take away the breakfast."

"Why so?" she asked, startled.

"I will not be under any further obligation to one who acts from pride rather than sweet charity. You have saved me from the hounds and from the gallows. Were it not for you, I should now be either about to mount the scaffold, or have passed by this time into that land where the only human attribute I can imagine as fitted to be there is charity. Whether the danger is now passed from this neighborhood I don't know; but I am going to risk it. I am going downstairs and out from under this roof."

"You will do no such thing!"

"I will!" And had she not placed herself between him and the trap, he would have carried out his intention.

"Stay where you are!" she said, in a voice in which there was something commanding.

"By what authority do you assume to direct me?"

"Your life belongs to me."

"True." He bowed his head.

"You understand me," she spoke, with even more authority than before. "I own you. I own your life. You are my slave in a stronger sense than my colored girl."

"It is that ownership of human beings, Miss Fain, coming down to you from past genera-

tions, that has given you the spirit to tyrannize over me now."

"I tyrannize?"

There was a surprise that was not feigned. She did not realize what she was doing.

"Yes; never have I been so trodden upon as by you."

There was a submission in the young soldier's tone that satisfied the imperious girl. She was ready to heal the cuts she had given, but she waited for him to speak again.

"What do you wish me to do?" he asked.

"Remain where you are till I regard it safe for you to go."

"Then you *have* a desire for my safety?" he asked, looking up at her quickly.

"You came here unbidden and placed yourself in my hands. Do you think it proper to come and go at your pleasure?"

Mark approached her, and bending low, took her hand and kissed it. There was something in the act to remind her of the lion—after the training.

XV.

SOURI AND JAKY.

IT was scarcely more than fifteen minutes after Souri had bid Mark "God speed" when old Triggs re-entered the prison grounds, and mounting the flight of steps leading to the second story went into the jail. No one seemed to be about the place. He entered his bedroom and found his wife dozing in her chair by the window. He asked for the colored girl, and his wife told him that she had not yet returned with the medicine. He waited, expecting every minute that she would come in. Had he not noticed an absence of the groans to which the supposed invalid had been treating him all the evening, he might have waited for Souri, without a movement, much longer than he did. As it was, it occurred to him that perhaps the prisoner might be dead. Taking up a tallow dip he went to the room where Mark was supposed to be confined. A figure was lying in the corner. The jailer went to it, and by means of the candle saw what he supposed to be the prisoner. The

face was to the wall, and he did not at first discover the deception.

"Yank," he said, "air y' dead?"

No answer.

He took hold of the figure's shoulder, and shook it.

Still no reply.

Turning Souri over, he at once recognized the face of the "mulatto girl."

In an instant he saw through the ruse that had been practiced. Without stopping to interrogate her, he rushed from the room, past the sentinel at the door, and out to the guard-house. There he gave the alarm, and in a moment the whole guard were in motion.

Souri hoped that the sentinel at the door would join in the chase, in which event she intended to go to Jakey's room, get him out, and attempt to escape. But the soldier only went as far as the door at the head of the long staircase. Then, remembering that he would doubtless be punished for letting one prisoner escape, and that there were several negroes in the "black hole" for him to guard, he went no further.

In five minutes Souri heard the barking of hounds without.

No word was sent to headquarters regarding Mark's escape till the hounds had followed the

scent to the river and there lost it. Then one of the guards was sent in to report the whole affair. Being an infantry man, he was obliged to walk, which took time. Cavalry was the only arm of the service capable of following the escaped man with a chance of success, and cavalry must be ferried across the river or ordered from Dallas, on the other side, ten miles above. The latter course was chosen, and two squadron were directed to proceed at once, the one to throw a chain-guard across the neck of Moccasin Point, the other to scour the river bank for a distance of several miles below. Had there been any cavalry nearer, Mark would have had a very slender chance to get away. As it was, he barely escaped one of the squadrons.

About noon of the day after Mark's escape, the military authorities began to relax their efforts to recapture him, as they had other matters of more importance to attend to; but they induced the country people, by hope of reward, to continue the search within a radius of ten or fifteen miles from Chattanooga. The provost marshal sent for Souri and Jakey with a view to gaining from them whatever he might concerning Mark's identity and his mission.

Souri, whose only clothing was that left her by Mark, begged Mrs. Triggs to get her more

suitable apparel before being taken out of the jail. Had the old woman any excuse, indeed had it not been for the presence of the guard at the door, there is no telling what she might have done to Souri. To have been thus duped, put her into a towering passion. She went into Souri's cell and berated her with her tongue and shook her fist in her face, but refrained from touching her. When Souri asked for a woman's dress she at first flatly refused, but fearing she would incur the displeasure of the provost marshal still further than she had if she should send a girl to him not properly dressed, she selected an old calico frock of her own and gave it to her.

Souri and Jakey were led to the marshal's office, followed by a crowd of curious people, who were aware that they had been the means of the escape of a spy ; but when they arrived the crowd were left outside.

Never was a man more puzzled what to do with prisoners than the marshal in the case of Souri and Jakey. He saw a simple, modest, poor white country girl, apparently not out of her "teens," and a stupid-looking boy, who was not very far into them.

"Who are you?" he asked of Souri, not unkindly.

"Missouri Slack."

"Where do you live?"

"On the Anderson road, not far from Jasper."

"And this boy?"

"He's my brother."

"When did you come from home?"

"Three days ago."

"What brought you; or how did you know that the prisoner was here and in jail?"

"Jakey sent me word."

"This boy?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"He sent me a silk hankercher what I give tother un."

"How did you send it, boy?"

"Niggers."

"Um."

"Well, you two are pretty young to be engaged in such mischief."

The officer looked at them with interest and vexation mingled. He had lost a prisoner for whom he was responsible, but he could not but wonder at such a dull-looking boy achieving so difficult a task as sending the communication, and could not but admire the sacrifice made by the girl.

"What do you think I ought to do with you?"

"Reckon y' mought gimme back my gun," said Jakey.

The officer could not repress a smile.

"What gun?"

"Th' one yer tuk tother day."

"Go and get the boy's gun, orderly," he said to a soldier on duty at the door.

The gun was not to be found then, but was recovered later, and Jakey was happy in receiving it.

"Do you know what you've been doing?" the officer resumed, addressing Souri. "You've helped a spy to escape, who will doubtless carry information to the enemies of your country."

Souri made no reply. She stood looking at the officer with her big black eyes. Fortunately for her, he had a daughter about her age.

Meanwhile some Tennesseans who hailed from Jasper had been sent for, and they came in to have a look at the prisoners. Several of them recognized both Souri and Jakey, and told the marshal that they were what they pretended.

This and their youth, together with the fact that the provost marshal was not a harsh man, saved them from punishment. There was a great deal of feeling against "renegade" East Tennesseans; and had they been men, they would have been taken back to the "black

hole" at the jail, and kept there till it was found necessary to move them from the fact of an approaching enemy. As it was, the marshal directed that they be taken into another room till he could hear from headquarters regarding them. He knew the Triggs and the "black hole," and feared to let them go back to them.

The officers at headquarters were too busy to meddle with such a case. The provost marshal's communication was returned with the following indorsement.

Respectfully referred back to the provost marshal with authority to do with these prisoners as he thinks for the best interests of the service. The spy having escaped it does not appear that there is any reason to hold them.

The brother and sister were brought in again to hear what was to be their fate. Souri was aware of the enormity of her offense and expected a severe punishment. She had determined to beg the officer to send Jakey back to his parents, then he might punish her as he liked.

"Suppose I let you and your little brother go home," said the marshal, "will you go there and keep out of any interference in matters that concern the Confederacy hereafter?"

"I'll go home," said Souri.

"Well, I reckon you'd better go," replied the officer. Then to the guard:

"Send the corporal here."

"Take these children," he said to that person when he arrived, "to the other side of the river and turn them adrift. And see that they don't get back here."

Souri's heart jumped into her throat for joy. Turning her expressive eyes on the officer, she said, "Thank you."

"Mr. Ossifer," said Jakey, "I thank yer fur gimmen me back my gun."

A smile broke over the faces of those present.

The next day the brother and sister arrived at home, and great was the rejoicing in the Slack family.

XVI.

A SOUTH CAROLINA GEOLOGIST.

WHEN the trap-door of the attic had closed over Laura Fain, after her interview with Mark, he stood for a few minutes pondering on her strange treatment of him. Then he turned to the breakfast. He had eaten nothing since the evening before and the sight of the greater part of a fried chicken (it had been killed by Laura's orders for him only that morning) was especially grateful. Mark applied himself to his meal, and while he ate, he went over the scenes through which he had passed since he set out on his mission. Surely he must have been gone a month. He counted the days. He had reached Jasper on the evening of the 20th of August; Chattanooga on the morning of the 22d; tried on the 24th; was to have been hanged on the 27th; escaped on the 26th. That was only the evening before. It was now the 27th—only a week. Never had he passed such a week before, and he hoped he never would again.

Soon after he had finished his breakfast, a

hand was extended through the trap, a pitcher of water and toilet articles were left and the dishes taken. At noon a meal was handed in by the same fair hand.

Though but two meals had been thus left, Laura began to perceive that she could not thus feed her charge without soon being discovered. When she took Mark's dinner to him she entered the attic, and had him close the trap after her.

"It will not do for you to stay here much longer," she said. "My mother has already become suspicious that I have something on my mind, and I fear being detected carrying these meals. I dare not tell her all, and I dare not risk her discovering that you are here."

"I will go to-night."

"It will be sure capture for you to go; the negroes tell me that the country people are all out looking for the—the spy."

"I can't stay here and compromise you."

"I have a plan. This evening I will watch for an opportunity for you to go downstairs. You can introduce yourself as a guest, and though you will be every minute in danger, you will be safer than here."

"And in case I am discovered will not be caught like a rat in a trap."

"You can appear as a traveler; you must

have a hat ; I will bring you one. At the first opportunity after dark I'll come to the trap and knock. Follow me downstairs. I don't think any one will recognize you in these clothes ; they have been packed away since my brother went to Virginia a year ago ; mamma only saw you, when you were here before, after dark on the veranda, and—well I think there will be a very good chance for you to play guest without detection."

"The servants ?"

"They would never betray a Yankee. They think you are all coming down to free them and they'll have nothing to do but lie in the sun."

"Not an unpleasant occupation on a pleasant day," said Mark irrelevantly.

"Should anything happen, I only fear mamma. And after all, she is a woman," she added significantly.

"Which you pretend not to be."

"If all goes well you will be assigned a room,—the guest chamber, perhaps,—and if it is not safe for you to be downstairs you may feign to be ill and keep your apartment."

Mark was better pleased with the plan than remaining where he was. He did not expect to stay in the house longer than till the next night, when he hoped those who were seeking

for him would become tired of the hunt and give him a chance for his life.

"I'll do all you suggest," he said to Laura; "and whether you wish it or not, I am very grateful."

She lowered her eyes under his look of gratitude, and then went below.

As soon as it grew dark, Mark listened for the signal. It came a few minutes before nine o'clock. Mrs. Fain had remained in the parlor up to that moment, when she went upstairs to get some article necessary to a piece of work she was doing. Laura followed her, turning out the lights by the way, and keeping on up to the attic.

Within a few seconds after her knock, Mark was descending the stairs and in a twinkling was in the parlor. Not half a minute elapsed between the signal and his arrival there.

It was not long before Mrs. Fain was heard groping about upstairs, in the dark, wanting to know who had turned out the lights and calling on a servant to relight them. When she entered the parlor she was surprised to see her daughter in company with a stranger, who was standing, hat in hand, as though he had just come in from without.

"Mamma," said Laura, with her heart in her throat, but with the most assured of innocent tones, "this is a gentleman who—Mr——"

"Rhett," supplied Mark.

"Mr. Rhett of——"

"South Carolina."

Any old Virginia or South Carolina name was quite enough to insure a welcome from Mrs. Fain. Without waiting to hear what he might say further, or an account of how he came to be there so suddenly, she said :

"I'm pleased to see you; sir; are you related to *the* Rhetts of South Carolina?"

"We all came of the same main stem, madam," said Mark, assuming the tone of a Southern gentleman.

"Mr. Rhett is traveling, mamma. He says that—that——"

"I am looking for mines, madam. You may not know it, but you are in the center of a rich mineral region."

It is pleasant to hear that fortune may come soon, and Mrs. Fain was evidently much pleased at the information.

"Indeed!" she said calmly.

"Yes, madam, I have been looking for ore. I presume I need not say whether in government interest or not; we must have cannons, you know."

"Government officers are not bound to disclose their identity or their objects, sir."

"I have been prospecting, madam, and am

separated from my party, owing to the stupidity of the driver of the vehicle which contains my crucibles and chemicals. I appeared at your door, and your daughter was kind enough to ask me in; not surprising, considering your far-famed Tennessee hospitality."

"You are quite welcome, sir."

Mark bowed low, with his hand on his heart, like a South Carolina gentleman of the old school.

"Have you supped?" asked Mrs. Fain.

"Yes, madam; I succeeded in getting a meal by the way. A poor one; indeed, a very poor one, with burnt beans for coffee. But since the Abolition Lincoln Government has violated all rules of civilized warfare by this cruel blockade—intending to starve us into subjection—I suppose we must take what we can get. I repeat it, we must take what we can get, madam."

Mark's eyes flashed with well-feigned indignation.

"It is our duty to bear our deprivations cheerfully," said Mrs. Fain. "We shall gain our independence at last, and that should be an incentive."

"It should, madam; and let me tell you we are about to see stirring times and great successes. This region has become of especial

military importance. Our forces will be in front of Nashville, perhaps Louisville, very soon; while General Lee can't fail with such noble men as he has in his army—the very flower of the South—the flower of the South, madam—he can't fail, I say, to drive the Yankees out of Virginia!

“You are very hopeful.”

While Mark was thus performing, Laura stood with downcast eyes, and if her mother had not been so interested in the hopeful words of the garrulous South Carolinian, she would have noticed a slow heaving of her daughter's bosom, with here and there a slight spasmodic action.

“And now, madam,” said Mark, “may I beg a night's lodging? I fear it is too late to find my party.”

“Certainly, sir. Call Miranda, my dear.”

Miranda was summoned, and directed to show the gentleman to the guest chamber on the second floor in the front of the house.

Mark went with the servant, and remained in his room long enough to have made a toilet and then sauntered downstairs. At the door of the parlor, in which Mrs. Fain and her daughter were sitting, he paused, as if waiting for an invitation to enter. This was given him, but he did not stay long. For a hot-blooded

South Carolinian, he seemed not to bear the heat well, and manifested a desire to get out on to the veranda. Indeed, he had a wholesome dread of the light. Besides, he desired to be where he could converse with Laura.

"If I may beg you to excuse me, ladies," he said, "I will go out for a little fresh air."

He strolled out into the night and walked back and forth on the veranda.

"Laura," said Mrs. Fain, "go out and entertain Mr. Rhett. I'm afraid of the night air myself."

"Do you think it essential, mamma?"

"Certainly I do. South Carolinians are especially particular about the entertainment of their guests, and I wouldn't have it go back to Charleston that we had been remiss for the world."

Laura obeyed her mother, and joined the guest on the veranda.

Mark lifted his hat respectfully to her.

"The moon is rising," he remarked. "I see the waxing light. If you will come this way," going to the end of the veranda, "you can see it better."

Laura followed him to the position, where they were out of hearing.

The relief from keeping Mark concealed in the garret, the success of the imposition of the

spurious South Carolinian on her mother, Mark's talent for playing his part, all combined to place Laura Fain in an exhilarated frame of mind. Like most women, she admired daring, and like most women, appreciated that daring in one in whom she was interested in proportion to the distance of the danger attending it.

"You are safe for the present," she said, her eyes glistening in the moonlight and a bright spot on each cheek.

"Thanks to your courage and ingenuity."

"Oh no, no. That's absurd. For you to speak of my courage! Do you know that the recklessness with which you put your neck into a halter is as unintelligible to me as mathematics would be to one of our servants."

"For the cause," said Mark, "one ought to——"

"Nonsense! The cause! You love these dangers."

"There is a fascination in them, I admit. So long as there is one chance for me, no matter how many there are against me—so long as I have an arm or a weapon to fight with, I am a man. When cornered and taken, I am the veriest coward in the world. While in prison in Chattanooga I moaned and whined like a frightened child. The truth is, that danger is fascinating only either before it is

encountered or after it has passed. When I am in it, I want to get out of it. When I am out of it I want to get in it again."

"I don't believe you know the meaning of the word fear."

"Indeed, you are mistaken. If I did not feel fear there would be no fascination in danger."

"Then you have a way with you of making people do what you like. When you were here before, you fascinated all the servants. You completely captivated Uncle Daniel, who has talked of no one else since."

"Daniel is a good man. He'll be of use to me yet."

"Yes, of use to you. You use every one, either openly or by deception. I almost fancied you were Professor—somebody, just now, when you were deceiving poor mamma. You reminded me of Mephistopheles for all the world."

"You flatter," said Mark in irony.

"You *are* Mephistopheles. You come here and compel me to harbor you. You are seeking to injure the cause I favor, and I give you my brother's clothes, when that brother is fighting for that cause. Why do I not send for some one to come and take you?"

"On account of your native loveliness."

"You are a very devil."

"I never regarded myself a saint."

"And the worst of it is," she went on, her eyes sparkling all the while, and talking rapidly, "that such deviltry is especially fascinating to me. I would love to be a man. I would do what you do. I would belong to the cavalry. I would be a scout. I would be a——"

"Spy?"

"Anything I had the courage to be. I would delight in battles, in charges, in——Heavens!"

The exclamation was occasioned by a horseman who had approached while they were talking. They had not noticed him till he had opened the gate and was half-way between it and the house. Laura sank into a seat; all color left her cheeks, and her heart seemed to stop beating.

"Don't be frightened," said Mark, bending over her and whispering in her ear. "It is only a private soldier. He is not after me, and if he is he can't have me."

Mark left her and advanced to the rail of the veranda.

"Can you tell me how fyar 'tis ter Chattanooga?" asked the man.

"About two miles, I reckon, as the crow flies; three or four really."

"Straight 'long up the road?"

"Yes."

"I'm a courier. I ben carryen despatches ; but I didn't go this way."

"Well, you just keep the road and you'll get through all right. Any news from the front?"

"Don't know any. I ben away from Chattanooga two days."

"Well, you haven't far to go."

"Good-night, sir."

"Good-night."

Mark went back to Laura. She had not recovered from her fright, and he was obliged to wait a few moments before he could get a word from her.

"I suppose you think me a dreadful coward," she said at last. "After all, I'm only a woman."

"Not cowardly for yourself ; for a poor devil whose neck is in a halter."

"Yes, I'm only a girl, but I own the life of a brave man, a soldier, a reckless monster, a fiend, a spy."

"Anything else?"

"There are no more words to express what I mean."

"Laura!" called Mrs. Fain. "If you're going to stay out any later you'd better get a shawl."

"I'm going in, mamma."

They walked into the house together. Mr. Rhett, of South Carolina, made a few commonplace remarks to Mrs. Fain and then begged to be excused, as he had been prospecting during the day and was very tired. He bowed low to the ladies, and then went upstairs.

XVII.

SURPRISED.

THE next morning Mark, hearing a tap at the door, got out of bed and opened it cautiously. As was natural under the circumstances, he saw danger in everything that occurred. He half expected to see through the slight opening he at first made the muzzle of a revolver pointing directly at him. He saw a very different sight. It was a large tumbler with a straw in it on a silver tray in the hands of a negro.

"Mrs. Fain's compliments, sah!" and he handed Mark a mint julep.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mark, with intense satisfaction.

"Present my compliments to your mistress, and tell her I perceive with pleasure that this noble Virginia custom has found its way into Tennessee, as it has long ago into South Carolina."

"Yes, sah!"

"There are alleviating circumstances even in the life of a spy," said Mark, contemplating

the beverage, "uncertain as that life is. Why will man not always be a philosopher? Here I am in a beautifully furnished room; have been sleeping between the whitest linen, on the softest of beds. I arise and behold this delicate attention on the part of my hostess, who, if she should know who I am, would bring a dozen bayonets to hedge me in, and I should be waving in the soft summer breeze at the end of a hemp cord in twelve hours. But she does not know who I am, and, considered philosophically, I am Mr. Rhett, of South Carolina, and in clover. Here's to Private Mark Malone, poor devil!"

However, Mark desired to keep his head cool, considering the circumstances, and contented himself with a few swallows of the julep; and after completing his toilet, joined the ladies at the breakfast table. He praised Mrs. Fain's fried chicken, and light biscuit, and corn bread, and was about to give the coffee a few words of encomium, when, tasting it beforehand, he discovered the prevailing chicory. So he entered upon a tirade against the blockade, and ended by hoping that Abe Lincoln would at last be hanged higher than Haman; a reference that gave him a disagreeable sensation about the neck, and caused Laura's bosom to heave tumultuously.

The comforts surrounding Mark, the kindness of his hostess, and, above all, the presence of a girl whose bosom seemed to contain such volcanic forces as would best harmonize with one whose chief object in life seemed to be to get himself hanged, conspired to make him feel a safety that he should not have felt under the circumstances. He had been campaigning for a year, during which period he had experienced no greater comfort than a McClellan saddle, and the women of the country through which he had passed had not received him with any marked evidences of pleasure. Is it to be wondered that he felt approximate content—if one can feel content whose neck is in a halter—in the Fain manor-house?

But Mark had something else on his mind which he knew was of more importance than his own safety, though its value, if he should possess it, would be dependent on that safety. He wanted some indication of where the enemy would strike. He was not so foolhardy as to think of going back to Chattanooga himself, but he resolved to send a messenger. If he could find some one to go to town that day, the latest news could be brought him in the evening. Then he would assume a disguise and be off in the night.

After breakfast he took his pipe and went out to smoke in the yard. He sauntered around to the barn and found Daniel at work upon the horses.

"Daniel," he said, "good-morning."

"Mornin', sah," said Daniel, eyeing him suspiciously.

"Nice lot of stock you have here, Daniel."

"Yes, sah ; fine stock."

"And I see you take good care of them. That pony shines as if his coat had been oiled."

"Dat Missie Laurie pony, sah."

"Ah ! It's a fine animal. And is that her phaeton?"

"Yes, sah."

Mark was standing very near Daniel, and suddenly turned and looked him in the eye, knowingly.

"Daniel," he said, "are you all right on the cause of freedom?"

"Reckon I air, sah."

"Suppose you had a chance to favor that cause, the cause which, if it triumphs, will make all you darkies free, would you do it?"

"Reckon I would, sah."

"Well, suppose a Union man were to ask you to——"

"Yo' counterance air berry faliliar to me, sah."

"Do I look like Mr. Slack?"

"God bress de Lawd! I wonder ef y' air Mr. Slack?"

"Or the colored girl who came here the other night," Mark asked, in a low, confidential tone.

"Fo' de Lawd!"

"Never mind who I am, Daniel. I'm a Union man. Now I want you to go into Chattanooga and learn all you can of the latest army news. Don't trust your own eyes, but ask people what's going on. I want to know if troops are leaving Chattanooga, and if so, where they are going. Here are ten dollars. Buy some things for the old woman and the children, and ask questions—of other people I mean, not me."

"Trus' me fur dat," said the old man, and dropping his work he began to harness a horse to the family wagon.

When Mark finished smoking, he went into the house. He passed into the library, where he found Laura. She seemed to feel easier than when Mark had been upstairs, but she was in continued dread. Mark asked her to sit on a sofa facing one window while he sat facing another. "Then we'll have the position enfiladed," he said.

Laura did not understand what that meant, but she did as he desired.

They sat thus without suffering the watch to relax during three delightful hours—delightful notwithstanding the danger Mark was in. Laura wanted an account of his adventures in Chattanooga and he gave it. When she came to Soure's part in his escape, Laura was visibly affected; indeed, so intensely were her feelings wrought upon by this portion of the story that she started at every sound, realizing the more perfectly that Mark's neck was still in jeopardy.

Then came an account of the trial; the march to the court-room; the waiting for the counsel; the arrival of Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh.

"Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh!"

Then it was all out that Laura's lover had defended the spy, and Laura confessed that she was Fitz Hugh's betrothed.

In the midst of the excitement attending all this, Mrs. Fain entered, carrying a silver tray on which was a basket of cake and a decanter and glasses.

"A little luncheon may not be amiss, Mr. Rhett," she said. "I don't know your South Carolina customs in such matters, but my daughter and I occasionally take a biscuit at this hour."

Mark rose and faced about. His hand went

to his heart and he bowed low. Laura too rose and stood looking at her mother.

"Madam," said Mark, "can I ever forget this kindness."

"If you will discover the ore you seek on our property, I shall feel amply repaid," said the lady sententiously.

"Trust me, madam, I will have diligent search made."

"Are you a geologist?"

"None but a geologist would be hunting for ore in the government service."

Mark stood with the stem of a wine glass between his thumb and finger, appropriating to himself such *impressement* as would naturally fill the breast of a South Carolina geologist hunting for iron with which to make cannons for the government.

"That is a fascinating study," remarked Mrs. Fain, who was a great reader and a very intelligent woman.

Now Mark, though an educated man, and born to a taste for the sciences, unfortunately knew less about the profession he had temporarily adopted than any other.

"There are some curious geological facts," Mrs. Fain went on, "which always interest me. I was reading yesterday that a famous geologist has said that centuries—I have forgotten

how many—were consumed while Niagara Falls were wearing their way from Lewiston to the present site. How long was it, Professor? I'm sure you have that title."

"It could not have been less than five hundred years, madam!" said Mark, laying great stress on the figures as something enormous.

"Five hundred! I thought it was something like twenty thousand."

Mark perceived that he had made a gross blunder, but it would never do for him to acknowledge it.

"I am aware," he said, "that such is the opinion of a certain school of geologists with more assurance than brains. I refer to those scoffers who are continuously trying to find evidence against the Mosaic account of creation, but I regard their position untenable."

There was a pleased look on Mrs. Fain's countenance. She belonged to the Baptist denomination, and believed thoroughly that the world was made in six days of twenty-four hours each.

"Professor," she said, withdrawing from the room at the same time, "I trust that you will remain in the neighborhood a long while, and I beg you to honor us by making this house your home in the mean time."

Mark was standing with a half filled glass of

wine in his left hand, while his right was on his heart. Mrs. Fain made her exit through the door by which she had come, opening into the dining-room. As the door closed Mark was bending to the floor, admirably representing a South Carolina gentleman of the olden time.

He heard something like a low cry—half surprised, half terror—from Laura. Turning quickly toward her he saw her eyes fixed in a stare on some object at the door opening into the hall. Another turn of his head, and there stood the figure of Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh.

Twice before had Mark seen that face; once when Fitz Hugh had approached the Fain house the morning Mark had left it for Chattanooga, and once when the young Confederate had defended him at his trial.

No sooner had Captain Fitz Hugh laid eyes on Mark's face than he recognized the spy he had defended at Chattanooga.

"Professor," he said coolly, "you are very adroit."

Mark turned scarlet, and then ashy pale. For a moment it seemed that his legs would not support him. It required time for him to collect himself, to make any reply whatever.

"Since you are so good at extricating yourself from difficulties, you have a fine opportu-

nity to show your skill now." Fitz Hugh spoke with his hand on the handle of his pistol. "May I trouble you to throw up your hands, *professor*?"

"It is not necessary," said Mark. "I am unarmed."

A picture of his certain fate flashed across his mind, and he wished Fitz Hugh would shoot him.

"On your word of honor?"

"Why do you ask such a question? You know that I am an arch deceiver."

"At any rate, you are a gentleman. Never mind throwing up your hands."

Meanwhile Mark had been giving his heart time to cease thumping, and had gathered his wits.

Laura remained silent, staring at them both as though she had lost her reason. Had she a hundred things to say her tongue could not have been made to utter one.

Mark turned toward Fitz Hugh and looked him square in the face. He had conceived an idea; a forlorn hope, it is true, still a hope. Quick to discern people's peculiarities, he had gotten an insight into Fitz Hugh's character when that officer had defended him at Chattanooga. He now resolved to take advantage of that knowledge.

"Captain," he said, "notwithstanding the position in which you saw me a few days ago ; notwithstanding the painful situation in which you see me now ; you have on both occasions done me the honor to consider me a gentleman. I assume to a perception in this respect not less keen than yours. Indeed, so sure am I of the delicacy, the refinement of your instincts, that I feel perfectly safe under this roof."

"How so?" asked Fitz Hugh, surprised.

"I am the guest of that young lady."

Mark stood with his arm outstretched, his finger pointing to Laura Fain. Laura gave a glance at Mark as he spoke, which caught the eye of Captain Fitz Hugh. It contained admiration, devotion. Fitz Hugh gazed from the one to the other without a word.

"I need not explain further, Captain," Mark added. "A gentleman cannot mistake my position ; only a gentleman can understand it."

"You mean, sir," said Fitz Hugh, "that I cannot honorably enter this house and profit, or cause my country to profit, by what I find here without the consent of the inmates."

"I do."

"Mrs. Fain is the acknowledged head of this house, and she is evidently deceived. But I concede to Miss Fain the right to speak for

her. I acknowledge Miss Fain's right to hold me to this secret, if any one has such a right. But when Miss Fain shall have been fully advised of all the facts——"

"Pardon me; she knows all you know."

"Then, when Miss Fain shall have duly considered the interests of her country, I am quite sure she will give her consent."

The attention of both men became fixed upon Laura, for it was evident that she would be called upon to make a decision between her country and her lover on the one hand, and the defenseless Union spy on the other. She was standing near the sofa, on which she had been sitting, steadying herself by resting her hand on the back of a chair. It was a moment of intensest feeling to all three. Laura knew the sterling worth, the high sense of honor and duty of her lover. She knew that if she held him to secrecy he would consider it evidence that she permitted her interest in the spy to overwhelm her sense of duty. And would he not attribute her protection to something more tender than an ordinary interest? Fitz Hugh realized her position; indeed there seemed to flash into both of them the feeling that her decision would lie between two men—her lover and the Federal spy. With Mark it was a question of life or death.

“Miss Fain—Laura,” said Fitz Hugh, speaking slowly and impressively, “I ask your permission to give up this impostor—pardon me, sir, for the plainness of my language; it is essential—this spy, who desires to carry information north to the detriment of our country; who seeks the defeat of our cause—the cause in which your brother is every day risking his life; lastly—though this may be a matter of small importance—the cause for which I, your lover, would lay down my life as I would lay it down for you. It seems to me that it is a question between your duty and your inclination. Does it seem so to you?”

“It does.”

“Then tell me; may I send for a guard to take him?”

Laura’s eyes shone like those of a tigress at bay. In a firm, clear voice, she said:

“No!”

For a few moments there was the stillness of death.

“She has decided in your favor, sir,” said Fitz Hugh, whose color left his cheek when Laura spoke the little word that decided his and Mark’s fate. “You have nothing to fear from me.” Then turning to Laura:

“I can understand the motive, the temptation. The act remains.”

"You may consider yourself released from all ties with one whose act you do not approve," said Laura.

"Be it so," and he turned to go.

Mark sprang forward and seized him by the wrist.

"My God! this shall not be. You believe that this is due to more than an ordinary womanly interest in Miss Fain for me. It is not so. I swear to you, on the honor of a gentleman and a soldier, that Miss Fain has manifested no other feeling than one of commiseration for a man hunted for his life."

"Your words do you credit, sir. Miss Fain, will you make my adieus to your mother, and I leave it to you to impart to her whatever, if anything, you may have to say as to the reason for my farewell to you."

Despite the stateliness with which the words were spoken, there was an indescribable sadness in the "farewell." He turned quickly and left the room, and in another moment they saw him ride down the roadway to the gate without once looking back.

XVIII.

OFF FOR THE UNION LINES.

MARK'S first impulse after Fitz Hugh's departure was to leave the house at once. He tried to say something to Laura, to soothe her, to excuse his own unfortunate part in her breaking with her lover. He could only go to her and, taking her hand, kissed it without a word. Then he told her that he should take the risk of capture and depart instantly.

He was discoursing upon the method of his departure in quick, excited tones, when a horseman entered the yard, and riding up to the veranda, drew a letter from his belt and handed it to a negro who went out to receive it. It was for Mrs. Fain. It had been sent through the lines from Nashville, where her husband was lying dangerously ill, and begged her to come to him.

After its perusal Mrs. Fain determined to set out the next day, taking with her her daughter and the maid Alice. Daniel would drive them.

"You shall go with us," said Laura to Mark.

"This is fortunate. In our company you will be far safer than trying to make your way alone."

It occurred to Mark that since he was being hunted as a half-starved creature in the disguise of a negro girl, he would be less liable to suspicion as a well-dressed man traveling with a party of Southern ladies than in any other character. At any rate he took this view of it, and when Mrs. Fain announced her intention to go, he offered to escort the party to the Union lines. The offer was accepted and preparations made to leave the next morning. Mrs. Fain wrote a note to the officer in command at Chattanooga (to send with the letter she had received from her husband for his perusal), asking for a pass for herself, her daughter, and two servants. Mark took the missives and went out to find Daniel, who had just returned from Chattanooga.

"Well, Daniel?"

"I been dar."

"What did you learn?"

"I hearn ebery one talken 'bout sojers goen to 'de Norf, and dey sayd day was goen t' Knoxville. Dey was marchen 'n marchen all de same way. I follered 'n dey brung up at de depot; 'n I sor one train arfter anudder go out full o' sojers inside and hangen on to de platform and on de roofs."

"How many trains did you see go out?"

"'Bout forty hundred."

"Daniel," said Mark, smiling at the figures, "you're smart as a whip. But you'll have to go right back to Chattanooga, and take this note to the commanding officer with this letter from your sick master to show him. The note is a request for a pass for the party to the Union lines. Keep your wits about you, and if he is an easy going sort of a man, you might try to get him to put in *three* servants instead of two. At any rate try to ring me in if you can. Do you understand?"

"Reckon I do, sah."

"Can you read?"

"A leetle. Missie Laura larned me."

"Well, read the pass he may give you and ask him to fix it so that it will include me as a servant. But you must use your judgment."

Daniel drove again to Chattanooga. Mark waited anxiously for his return. Indeed, so impatient was he that he thought the negro had gone twice as long as he had when he saw him drive into the yard. He at once went out to the barn to meet him.

"Any luck?" he asked anxiously.

"I got de pass fur Misses and de res', but I didn't get what yo wanted. I got a paper hyar. Mebbe it'll do."

Mark took the paper. It was a pass for Thomas Green and wife from Chattanooga to the Union lines.

"How did you get this?" asked Mark, surprised.

"I hab to wait while folks was gotten passes. De officer go out to de udder room fur a moment. Dis was layen on de desk 'n I tuk hit up and brung hit away."

"Well," said Mark, "it's not exactly what I want, but ingenuity will have to help me through. You're a trump, Daniel."

In the morning, when all was ready for the departure, two vehicles were brought around to the door, the one a two-horse carriage, the other Laura's phaeton drawn by her pony. Mrs. Fain entered the former with Alice, Daniel being in the driver's seat. Laura and Mark got into the phaeton.

Mark took the lead, designing to make for Battle Creek. The distance was not twenty miles, and he knew that they could make it in a few hours. It was a bold game he was playing, but the proximity of the halter was wearing on him, and he desired to get rid of suspense. Besides, his presence, connected with his critical situation, was wearing on Laura. He, therefore, felt an exhilarating pleasure when they drove out of the gate and trotted along the pike westward. Hope cheered him.

All went well during the first ten or twelve miles, when Mark received a piece of information which seriously interfered with his plan. Meeting a courier riding toward Chattanooga, who looked as if he might be the bearer of some important news, Mark hailed him and asked if he had anything from the front.

"The Yankees air getten no'th right smart," the man replied. "Reckon th' air left Battle Creek."

Mark argued that if this were true there would be confusion on that route, and it would be better to take another. They were not far from the road leading from the Chattanooga pike north to Anderson, on which the Slacks lived. Mark concluded to take this road as far as Anderson, and then strike west with a view to reaching McMinnville on the other side of the mountains. Mrs. Fain left all to Professor Rhett, in whom she had perfect confidence, and on coming to the road in question Mark led the party northward.

The change of route was unfortunate, inasmuch as it would add another day to the journey. The departure from the Fain residence had been delayed by the preparations till nearly noon. McMinnville was a considerable distance over the mountain, and Mark knew they could not reach it that night. He remembered

that they would soon pass the Slack's, and it occurred to him that it would be a capital place to pass the night, giving them a good day of twelve hours light on the morrow to pursue their journey. His disappointment at the delay was compensated for by the thought that he would likely learn something of Souri and Jakey, of whom he had heard nothing since he left them in the Chattanôoga jail.

Mark told Laura of his plan. She was distressed at the delay. Something seemed to tell her that it would bring trouble. But Mark's reasoning was unanswerable and there seemed nothing else to do. If they must spend a night anywhere it would better be among those upon whom Mark could rely.

At last they drove up at the Slack's gate. Mark handed the reins to Laura and jumped from the phaeton impatiently. Not seeing any one in the front of the house, he proceeded to the rear. The first person he met was Jakey. He took the boy up and hugged him.

"Are you glad to see your big brother, Jakey?"

"Air th' corn ripe?"

Souri came out of the house, her big eyes glistening and her expressive face radiant with pleasure and excitement. She had heard noth-

ing of Mark since he left her in prison. Mark seized her by both hands.

"You uns air safe. I knowed it," she said, almost in a whisper. She could hardly speak for joy.

"For the present, Souri, thanks to you."

Mark asked no questions then. He knew that they were safe and at home, and he hastened to inform them, and the father and mother who came out to welcome him, that he was with a party who was unaware of his true character, which they must not betray, and desired permission to stay in the house over night. Then he led them around to the gate. Daniel had meanwhile caught up, and the two vehicles were halted in the road.

"We will spend the night with these good people," said Mark. "They are quite willing and will make us as comfortable as possible."

The party alighted and the horses were driven to the barn. Mrs. Fain and her daughter were given the room in which Mark had changed his clothes when he went through to the South, and Mark was assigned a bivouac on the gallery, or in the barn, or any other place he might select.

An apology for a meal was carried in to Mrs. Fain and Laura, which they left untasted, preferring a luncheon they had brought with

them in a basket. After supper Laura came out and begged Mark to bring Souri and Jakey to speak to her. She smoothed Jakey's tumbled hair out of his eyes and asked him if he remembered her. Jakey was about to reply in his usual fashion when he checked himself, and for the first time since Mark had known him answered directly. Souri stood, eyeing Laura from the corners of her black eyes, with a mingled expression of admiration and antagonism. Laura spoke to her kindly, but got only monosyllables in reply.

Mark passed the evening with the Slack family, listening to a recital of Souri's and Jakey's experience after he had left them in the jail at Chattanooga, and he gave them an account of his own adventures.

After all were asleep that night Mark took Farmer Slack out into the yard where they could converse unheard, and developed a plan he had conceived for Souri and Jakey.

"It is due to your son and daughter," he said, "that I am here at this moment; indeed, that I am alive. I belong to a wealthy family and am wealthy myself. It only requires means to make a splendid woman of the girl and a fine man of the boy; for means will produce education, and education is the open door to a desirable career. I am going to leave

with you a letter to my father in Ohio, which will contain an order for a sufficient amount of money to insure both Jakey and Souri an education. Take or send them North, present the letter, and you will find everything provided for you. Souri may not consent at once, but doubtless she will in time. Now, I must have pen and paper."

"You uns is a good' un, stranger. You treat us far. Hadn't you better send the letter when y' git no'th?"

"No. I must write it to-night. I am by no means safe; my neck is still in a halter."

The man led the way to his bedroom, where the old woman was asleep. There he produced writing materials, and Mark wrote an order which, whether he lived or not, insured the future of his two friends, his preservers among the "poor white trash" of Tennessee.

Mrs. Fain and her daughter began their preparations for sleep early. From the time of her earliest childhood Laura had yielded to a feminine habit of looking under the bed before getting into it. The troublous times had only aggravated this disposition. True, guerillas—the main objects of dread in those war days—unlike the traditional robber, did not conceal themselves under beds. It might be supposed that Laura would not look for a rob-

ber in the house of a poor white man like Farmer Slack. For one to conceal himself there, to crawl out in the middle of the night for the purpose of stealing jewelry, would be absurd. Nevertheless, the force of habit was strong in Laura, and before getting into the bed she stooped and looked under it.

Mark, it will be remembered, had left his uniform and arms under this very bed. Laura saw a suspicious dark mass and started back with what for want of a better name may be called a shrieklet. But Laura was no coward, and returning to the attack, she dragged out the belongings of private Mark Malone.

"What do you suppose it means, mamma?"

"I fear," replied the mother, "that we shall be murdered before morning."

"Why?" asked Laura, aghast.

"These people are doubtless guerrillas, or this place is the haunt of a guerrilla band. They have murdered a Union soldier and hidden his garments under the bed. Be careful, my child, that gun is loaded; it may go off."

"But, mamma," said Laura, who had meanwhile recovered her equanimity, "I don't think Professor Rhett would permit us to stop at a place where we would be murdered."

"Dress yourself at once, Laura, and find the professor: tell him what you have discovered."

Mrs. Fain would not be satisfied till her daughter did as she desired. Mark was called from the company of the Slack family, and informed of the threatening danger.

To Laura's relief, his face, serious when she began, broke into a smile as she proceeded.

"That's one of my stage costumes," he said, "for a character which you have not yet seen me perform. Go to bed and have no fear, for I shall roll myself in a blanket and sleep on the gallery at your door. Only be ready to hand me my carbine and pistol in case I require them."

"Mamma," said Laura, when she returned to her mother, "Professor Rhett says that those clothes belong to a Union soldier who passed through here about a week ago to go to Chattanooga, as a spy on the movements of our troops."

"I hope he has been caught and hanged by this time," said Mrs. Fain, with spirit.

"Well, if he hasn't, and comes back to-night and tries to get in here, the professor will shoot him, because he told me to be ready to hand him his rifle."

Such is the effect of evil communications. Laura Fain was becoming as accomplished a deceiver as Mark Malone.

The night was passed with snatches of sleep

by all the party. In the morning, after the pork and corn-bread meal of the country, the travelers again got into the carriages. While they were standing before the gate prior to departure, Mark saw Souri out by the well-house. He went there to bid her good-by.

"Souri," he said, "I wish there was some way in which I could show you the gratitude I feel toward you. When I think of my fate, had you not appeared in the nick of time to save me by your wit, and daring, and sacrifice, I feel that I would like to make some corresponding sacrifice for you."

"Laws, I didn't do nothen. Besides," she leaned over the well, and looked down into its depths, "you uns and me is too differ. You uns is a gentleman and I air poor white trash."

There was an inexpressible melancholy in her tone.

"Souri," Mark went on, "I have made an arrangement with your father to make a lady of you. I can't make such a sacrifice for you as you have made for me; that is impossible; but I can do this if you will act with me and consent to the plan. I shall be off in a moment, and before I go I want you to promise me that you will consent. I am still in danger, and you must grant me this, as perhaps a last favor."

The girl burst into tears.

"Promise."

"I don't keer what I do."

"Do you promise?"

"Yas, I promise."

With a pressure of the hand he turned away, and stalking to the gate, got into the carriage beside Laura. Daniel and Mrs. Fain had started. Mark followed, and had gone but a short distance when he heard Jakey calling to him. He pulled in the pony and waited for the boy to come up. Jakey was holding something out to him, which, as he drew nearer, Mark recognized as the red silk handkerchief.

"Souri sent it ter y'."

"Tell her that I'll never part with it."

"'N I got the squirrel gun," said the boy.

"All right, Jakey; keep it to remember me by."

Mark grasped the boy's hand and then drove on. Laura Fain leaned back on the cushions in silence.

XIX.

THOMAS GREEN AND WIFE.

MARK designed driving to Anderson, some twelve miles from the Slacks' house, whence he knew there was a road leading up in the mountains through a place called Altamont, some twenty miles further, to McMinnville. He was informed by people he met on the road that Altamont had been recently occupied in force by the Union troops. With luck they might reach the Union lines, which would doubtless extend several miles from Altamont, that afternoon.

"Within six hours," said Mark, "I shall either be safe among Union soldiers or on my way back to Chattanooga."

Laura shuddered, but said nothing.

Mark found a very different condition of affairs at Anderson from what he had found along the road. The Confederates had some cavalry force there, and more at Dunlap, five miles north. On the road he heard that General Bragg was at Dunlap, but with no troops save cavalry.

"I see it all," said the spy to himself, "the wily fox is confronting our forces with a handful of cavalry, while the two divisions of Cheatham and Withers are marching north behind him, and the main force has gone to Knoxville by rail on a line still further east. No wonder our generals are puzzled and watching a line from Battle Creek to Cumberland Gap. If the Lord will only let me get through to carry this information, I'll never ask to live to go on another such expedition."

The party were stopped near Anderson by a picket. Mrs. Fain produced her pass and stated that the two behind were in her company. The officer took no especial care in reading it, and when Mark and Laura came up they got safely through without question.

Mark was now anxious about the picket which must be passed in a few minutes on the road leading west from Anderson. Mrs. Fain was still ahead, and he hoped that all would go as well as at the picket just passed. Not a word was spoken between him and Laura; both dreaded getting out of Anderson, but once past the next picket they would breathe easier.

When they reached it, Mrs. Fain had been passed through and gone on. The officer in command, however, had read the pass care-

fully. He had not noticed any mention of Mark in it.

"Where's your pass?" he asked.

"Didn't the lady ahead show it to you?" asked Mark.

"Her pass didn't include you."

"Didn't it?" Mark feigned surprise.

"No."

"Oh, I forgot; mine and my wife's is separate," and he drew out the pass of "Thomas Green and wife."

Meanwhile Laura had turned white as a cloth. The officer read the pass, and would doubtless have let them go on, had he not noticed Laura's agitation.

"You'll have to go back to headquarters and get Major Taliaferro's order on that. He commands at Anderson."

Mark remonstrated. He argued that he would become separated from Mrs. Fain; he urged his wife's desire to reach her sick father. All in vain. He was told that the headquarters were only half a mile down the road, and he would lose but little time. He made a virtue of necessity and drove back with apparent good nature.

When he reached the house that was pointed out to him as headquarters, he left Laura in the phaeton and went inside. The command-

ing officer had gone to Dunlap, five miles away, to pay his respects to General Bragg, and would not be back for an hour or two.

Mark resolved to report his absence to the officer of the picket post, in the hope that he would not be compelled to wait. He drove to the picket, and used his tongue persuasively, but to no purpose. The more anxious he seemed the more resolved grew the captain.

There seemed to be nothing to do but return and await the arrival of the commanding officer. Mark reluctantly turned the horse's head and drove back to headquarters. Laura's heart sank within her.

It was sunset when Major Taliaferro, a pleasant looking man of twenty-seven or twenty-eight, rode up to the door, and turning his horse over to an orderly entered the office.

"Major Taliaferro?" asked Mark.

"At your service, sir."

"Major, I have been detained by the officer at the picket, who wants your name on my pass. My wife's mother has gone on and her daughter is very anxious to join her. It is extremely unfortunate for us to get so far separated from Mrs. Fain."

"Fain? of the Fains of Chattanooga?"

"The same."

"I have heard of the family, but have never

had the pleasure of meeting any member of it. One of my friends is engaged to Miss Fain. I have just parted from him at Dunlap."

Mark and Laura cast a quick glance at each other,—a glance of terror on the part of Laura.

"We are fortunate in falling into your hands," said Mark, "and I beg you will not delay us a moment." And Mark handed him the pass.

"Certainly not." And the major took up a pen to write his endorsement. First he read the pass carefully. He was thinking of what his friend Fitz Hugh had told him of the Fains. He was under the impression that there was but one daughter.

"Mr. Green," he said, looking up from the pass, "hadn't you better stay here over night? The road is mountainous and infested by guerillas. It is positively dangerous to travel."

"By no means. What would Mrs. Fain think of our not joining her on the road?"

"It is dangerous for her as well as you. I'll send a messenger after her to advise her stopping at some farm-house. I'll do better than that. I'll send a corporal and half a dozen men to insure her safety till morning."

There was something in the man's tone, polite as it was, that indicated to Mark that he was held for further information.

"As you please, Major."

"And I shall insist upon your accepting my hospitality. One connected in any way with my friend Fitz Hugh must not want for any comfort I can supply."

The house occupied by Major Taliaferro belonged to a family who had gladly given up a portion of it for the safety insured by the presence of a commanding officer. The major was given a room downstairs for an office, and a bedroom upstairs. When it was decided that Mark and Laura should remain he gave Mrs. Green, as he called her, the use of the latter for the purpose of arranging her toilet before supper.

When Laura was upstairs Mark was looking out of the window of the major's office. He saw the men ride off to overtake Mrs. Fain. To his consternation another cavalryman, with a letter in his belt, mounted his horse and dashed down the road.

Laura came down at that moment and Mark said to her anxiously :

"I am detained on suspicion. I shall be taken back to Chattanooga," and he pointed to the courier.

The color left Laura's cheeks. They had got so near to safety, and now, after so many dangers, the end was at hand. She could

scarcely sustain herself as she tottered into the room occupied for the office.

This is the letter the courier bore northward. It was addressed on the envelope to Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh, near Dunlap.

ANDERSON, August 29, 1862.

MY DEAR CAMERON :

A man purporting to be Thomas Green, with his wife, formerly a Miss Fain, of Chattanooga, is here, desiring a pass to the Union lines. There is something suspicious about the man. The couple are separated from the wife's mother and the father lies very ill at Nashville. I dislike to detain them, and I do not regard it safe to pass them. Can you help me out of the difficulty ?

Yours very truly,

WALLACE TALIAFERRO.

Major Taliaferro soon joined Mark and Laura in his office, and offering his arm to Laura led the way to the supper-room. His treatment of both was most deferential, but it failed to deceive either that they were prisoners.

There was a strength of nerve in Mark that would not break while there was hope. He chatted with the host or jailor, whichever he might be called, with ease, and at times with gayety. Not so Laura. The situation was too frightful for her to endure without some manifestation of anxiety. She ate nothing.

She did not hear what was said to her, and her eyes plainly showed the troubled spirit within. Mark made no reference to her condition till after supper. Then, when all three went out on to the veranda, he said to her:

"Come, let us take a stroll. You have been traveling all day, and this delay troubles you. A walk in the air will revive you."

Mark assumed with such apparent carelessness that he was free to walk about where he liked, that Taliaferro had not the will to stop him. Besides, he had no heart to interfere with the pleasure of a woman whom he was pretending to treat as a guest. The couple walked leisurely down the road, Mark looking at the sunset tints with well-assumed indifference, occasionally pointing to some object by the way or in the distance, calling Laura's attention to it at the same time. He knew the major's gaze was fixed upon him and he was doing all this for a purpose.

The road led straight from the house a short distance and then entered a wood. As soon as they were concealed behind the trees Mark stopped suddenly and turned to Laura:

"My God, this is terrible!"

"You are lost!" said Laura, faintly. She could scarcely speak the words.

"I? Yes, I. But you—what have I led you

into? Why was it not over on that morning when it was intended? Then you would not be implicated, now your good name is ——”

“No one will trouble me,” she gasped. “But you—they will drag you——”

“You have protected me—a spy. Not only that—that is nothing in comparison with having passed as my wife. There is a blight.”

“I can bear it.”

“There is but one way out of this disgrace. You must be married before we return to that house. And to whom?” his voice changed from a rapid, excited tone to deepest gloom, “to one who must die—die on the scaffold. At any rate you will be free. You will be a widow.”

Laura, stood, the very impersonation of despair.

“All I can do to atone for this,” Mark went on rapidly, “and it is nothing—is to make you my wife, since I have passed you as such. Laura, will you marry me?”

She looked at him earnestly. Her eyes were big with deep emotion. There was a look in them that he could not understand.

“No!”

“Then I can do nothing for you.”

“I will marry only the man who loves me, and whom I love.”

"O Laura," he said, "if your heart were only mine! then it would be different. I love you so well, I worship you with such fervor that I would go back to that dreadful jail without a word, could I place you where you were before you met me. But you ——"

Laura burst into a torrent of tears. This man, who had so suddenly appeared in her life; who had won her sympathy, who had compelled her admiration; who had absorbed her whole being into his daring, chivalrous, reckless nature—this man loved her, and he was doomed!

With a cry she threw her arms around his neck.

"Laura, sweetheart," said Mark, caressing her, "we have but little time. We know not whom we shall have to face. My true character must soon be known. Will you give yourself to one who will doubtless to-morrow be claimed by——"

Pale as ashes, she put her hand over his mouth that he might not speak the word—"death."

"Will you? Speak!"

"Yes, now, quick, what can we do?"

"Marry ourselves."

"How?"

He grasped her hand. There was a ring upon

it—a plain gold band; he took it off and putting it on her finger again, said:

“I, Mark——”

“Is it really Mark?”

“Yes, I am Mark Maynard. I, Mark, take you Laura, to be my wife. Do you take me to be your husband?”

“I do.”

“Then we are man and wife in the sight of God——”

“And for man we care not.”

“Man and wife under the law. We are really married.”

Scarcely was this hurried ceremony over when a cavalryman came riding leisurely from the direction of headquarters. He had been sent by Major Taliaferro—who, as soon as Mark was out of sight, became anxious with regard to him—with instructions to keep him in sight without appearing to do so.

There was nothing left for them to do but return to the house. As they walked, Mark whispered:

“I feel again all the confidence I have ever felt. I must live to make you happy. Be ready for anything that may happen, my darling, my wife. I shall, doubtless, play some bold game; I don't know what, but it will be bold. If I leave you suddenly, meet me (should

I succeed in my attempt) within the Union lines. If not we will meet—in heaven.”

These few words were all that Mark had time to say to his newly married wife. For scarcely had they turned to go back, when they met the major. He was uneasy lest Mark should depart without leave. He accompanied them back to the house.

XX.

FLIGHT.

IT was nine o'clock in the evening. Major Taliaferro and his guests were sitting in his office room chatting. A clatter of horses' hoofs was heard at the front of the house and some one dismounted. In another moment there was a tramp of cavalry boots in the hall; all turned to the open door—and there stood Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh.

For a moment he regarded Mark and Laura sternly, then advancing a few steps he bowed low to Laura.

"Captain," said the major, rising, "I suppose it is useless to deny to this lady and gentleman that I deemed it my duty to make sure of their identity before allowing them to pass. The family to which they claim to belong is known to you; therefore I sent to you for information. I see you have answered my inquiry in person. If you vouch for them I shall be happy to pass them in the morning and shall apologize for their detention at the same time—my excuse being the cause we serve."

All eyes were fixed on Fitz Hugh, Mark's and Laura's with ill-concealed anxiety.

"This *was* Miss Fain," said Fitz Hugh. "She would not be traveling as any man's wife unless she were married to him. If you detain them, you must do so on your own responsibility."

Both Mark and Laura drew a sigh of relief.

"I have no desire to detain them," said Taliaferro, "after what you have said; but it is altogether too late for them to proceed to-night. The only amends I can make for discommoding them is to make them comfortable. Mrs. Green, your room is ready for you."

The pain that would otherwise have attended this scene was alleviated in Laura's heart by the delight she felt at a prospect of safety for her husband. She gave her former affianced a look of gratitude. Then she glanced at Mark for instructions. Seeing no hint in his eyes she passed out of the room and went upstairs.

"Captain," said Mark, "may I beg a cigar? I usually smoke at this time of night."

"Here are cigars, gentlemen," said Taliaferro, producing a box.

"If you smoke, Captain," added Mark, "I shall be pleased of your company."

"With pleasure."

All lighted cigars, and Mark and Fitz Hugh strolled out on the veranda.

"Captain," said Mark, as soon as they were outside. "I have never met a man whom I have so admired, so honored, as you ; and yet I have robbed you of your love. This last act of kindness to her and to me, so well indicating your magnanimity, is more than I can bear. I cannot accept anything more, even for *her* sake. I cannot stay here to be shielded by you and behind her skirts. I am about to leave this veranda and fly to the Union lines. Thank God, I have one who is the soul of honor, in whose charge to leave my wife. Consider her under your care. She will doubtless need all you can give her, for I expect never to see her again. I shall doubtless be captured before to-morrow noon. If you were not my enemy, if you had not been my rival, I would love you as a brother."

Without waiting for a reply Mark left the veranda, and in another moment was lost in the darkness.

Captain Fitz Hugh stood as one petrified. So many conflicting emotions were within him that nothing seemed real. For a time he was in a sort of stupor. When he emerged from it the first thing that took definite shape in his mind was a deliberation as to what he should

do. Should he go in and confess all to the major? Should he keep the secret? Laura's secret. He leaned against a pillar of the veranda and passed his hand over his brow.

He could not stab Laura; he could not even betray the man who had left her in his care. He did nothing.

Half an hour elapsed, when Taliaferro, who had been busying himself with some papers, began to wonder what had become of the two men. He got up and went out on to the veranda.

"Where's Green?" he asked quickly.

"Gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes, gone half an hour ago."

"What does this mean, Cameron?"

"It means that I have been keeping from you what I can keep no longer, or I would. This man Green is a Federal spy."

Taliaferro threw up his hands in horror.

"And you have been protecting him!"

"Yes."

"Cameron—my friend—great God—are you a traitor? There is something back—tell me, quick."

"Twice before he has crossed my path. He was taken and tried at Chattanooga. I was detailed to defend him. I had never seen him

before. He was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged, but escaped.

"When I met him again it was at the Fains' house. Laura Fain, the woman upstairs, then my betrothed, but now—his wife, was concealing him."

"Well?"

"I saw that she was infatuated with him. She claimed him for her guest. I——"

"Well, go on."

"I could not honorably inform on him."

"Oh, Cameron!—what absurdity—what idiocy—what——"

"This afternoon you sent for me. I came. I saw the man I had seen twice before—with my—with the loveliest, the noblest of all women—his wife."

The major only stared at his friend; he had no words to express his feelings, his sympathy.

"When we came out here he told me that he would accept nothing further for himself at my hands; that he would not shield himself behind a woman's skirts. He walked away before me."

"And you?"

"I permitted him."

Taliaferro shuddered. He knew that his friend, by his act, had placed himself in a terrible position.

"Cameron," he said, "do you know you are liable to be shot for this?"

"I do."

"I always told you," the major went on anxiously, impatiently, "that your notions of honor were absurd, quixotic."

"The highest sense of honor is never quixotic. It is best fitted for a Christian, a soldier, and a gentleman."

"And do you expect me to let this spy go?"

"No. Protect yourself—the cause. Send after him. It is I who have connived at his escape, not you. You must not suffer."

"The cause alone is enough."

"Orderly," he called, to a man standing by the gate.

The soldier approached and stood at attention.

"Go, tell Captain Heath that the man who was here this evening has gone, and I want him followed and brought back. Tell him to send by all the roads."

The man saluted and went away.

"Cameron," said the major, after giving the order, "God grant that this act of yours may not be known. It will not be, for I am the only one who knows of it, and it will never pass my lips."

"I am responsible for my acts, and if it be-

comes known I trust I shall have courage to meet the consequences like a man."

"And now, Wallace," he continued, "I am going. The young wife who was left in my charge, I leave in yours. I would gladly protect her myself, but I prefer to spare her the pain of being under my protection. If her husband is taken, and she needs me, send for me."

"Cameron, you are leading me to hope that he will not be taken."

Fitz Hugh went to the gate near by where his horse was standing, and mounting, rode away.

As soon as he had gone, Taliaferro called a negro woman, and told her to go to the lady's room and ask her (if she had not gone to bed) to come to him, as he had a communication to make. Laura had no thought of taking off her clothes. She was waiting for what might happen. When she received the major's message, she went down to him with a heart beating wildly.

"Madam," said the major deferentially, "your husband has gone."

"Where?" asked Laura, with a blanched cheek.

"He walked away in the presence of Captain Fitz Hugh, who would not detain him, or inform me that he had gone till he was obliged to do so."

Laura clasped her hands, and mutely breathed a blessing on the man who had spared her husband for her sake.

"How long has he been gone?" she asked.

"More than half an hour."

"Have you ordered his pursuit?"

"I have."

"And he has a start of——"

"Thirty minutes."

"You'll never take him. He bears a charmed life."

"And now, madam, what can I do for you? My friend charged me to see that you have every attention."

"I will go on and join my mother."

"To-night?"

"To-night—now."

"Your phaeton shall be at the door in a few minutes. You must accept my escort. There will be a guard beside."

"It is not necessary for you to go."

"I shall not permit you to go without me."

"Orderly! Hey! orderly! The lady's phaeton at once. And send for a corporal and six men."

In ten minutes Laura, Major Taliaferro, seated beside her, six stalwart cavalry men in gray about her, was on her way to join her mother.

XXI.

THE BALL IS OPENED.

MARK knew the direction of the roads leading from Anderson, and believed that he could avoid the pickets. Making his way over a space covered with bushes and a low growth of timber, he struck the road by which he had come that day at a point beyond the vedette. Then half a mile's run brought him, out of breath, to a house. The occupants were not asleep, and Mark succeeded, by persuasion and threats, in getting a horse to take him to Slack's, promising to send it back the next day with liberal pay for its use.

He arrived at Slack's shortly before midnight, and his horse fell exhausted in the yard. Slack received him with a shot-gun pointed through the crack of the door. Mark made himself known and asked for his uniform and his arms. The old man got them for him, and taking them to the stable, Mark put them on. Then he went to the stall where his horse stood. The mare knew her master when he threw his arms about her neck and seemed as glad to see him as he was to see her.

"Ah, Madge, my darling! once on your back, old girl, and the devil may catch me if he can."

He lost no time in putting the bit in her mouth, and strapping on the saddle. Then, putting his foot in the leather-covered stirrup, he lifted himself into his seat.

For the first moment in ten days Mark felt the comfort of being in the saddle with his arms about him.

A few steps took him out of the barn; then turning his horse's head in the direction from which he had approached the place with Souri, he rode away among the trees. Before going a hundred yards he stopped and listened. Some sound had caught his ear. It was the gallop of horsemen. He waited, dreading a neigh from his own horse, which he patted to hold her attention. The horsemen passed on down the road.

"Ride on, brave boys," said Mark, "if you're after me, the faster you go in that direction the better I'll like it."

In the light of the waning moon he trampled over the shadows of leaves as on a "crazy quilt." He crossed the Sequatchie by the ford over which Souri had guided him, and took care not to head too far down stream, as he had done before. Then he crossed the creek near the

fallen log. He struck the road by which he had left Jasper just south of the fork at which Souri had halted him. Without hesitating a moment he struck out at a brisk canter over the left of the two roads—the one leading to Tracy City.

Mark had never experienced such sensations as now. On his own fleet horse, his carbine slung on his shoulder, his pistol at his side, on the road to the Union camps, a wife whom he adored to join him in case he should arrive safely—why should not the spirit within him fairly glow with hope?

And never had the beautiful Madge borne her rider with such evident exhilaration. Mark's feelings seemed to be infused into her, as she sped on, her iron shoes dashing sparks from the stones, far brighter than the light of the waning moon glistening on the barrel of his carbine.

He reached Tracy at sunrise. He did not dare to go through the place, so he skirted it, and once above it, rode along the mountain plateau over a road leading directly north. He was now familiar with the country. Arriving at a place called Johnston's, he struck off to the right to Purdons, where two roads join, leading from there to Altamont.

Mark struck the main stem a few hundred

yards from the junction. As he rode up a slight rise on to the road, he cast his eye to the right. There, standing at the fork, was a Confederate cavalry vedette.

He saw Mark as soon as Mark saw him. Shouting to the rest of the picket post, he dashed forward.

“Now for it, Madge!”

The animal knew by his tone that there was work to be done, and although she had been out since midnight she began the race with vigor. On sped the Union soldier, followed at a few hundred yards distance by the Confederate, and half a mile by several others of the picket post. Mark was within range, but his pursuers did not care to draw rein in order to fire, doubtless fearing that if they should fail to bring him down by the bullet, he would escape.

Madge did nobly, and had she not been riding up a mountain side for three or four hours would have easily distanced her pursuers. As it was, the man who followed first was gaining rapidly. Mark knew that he must either dispose of this fellow or be taken. Coming to a slight bend in the road, he rode a hundred yards beyond to a place where his pursuer must suddenly appear around the trees. Reining in his horse, he faced about

and stood still with his carbine at an aim. As soon as the man appeared Mark fired.

The Confederate fell from his saddle and his horse made off into the woods.

Mark turned and was soon again flying forward. He judged that he could not be very far from the Union pickets between him and Altamont. Looking ahead he saw a horseman standing in the road. Whether he was Union or Confederate he did not know; but there was no way to escape the remainder of his pursuers except by keeping right on and trusting to meeting a friend. As he rode on he noticed that the horseman wore a forage cap. This looked well, for the Confederates nearly always wore hats. Then he could see that the man's body had a dark hue. It must be blue. At last he came near enough to discern yellow facings.

There was a whistling of bullets by his ears; he turned his head and saw that his pursuers had halted. They had evidently seen the Union picket and fired a farewell volley at the fugitive.

Private Mark Malone was within the Union lines; his mission was ended.

Mark was taken to the officer in command at Altamont. On the way from the picket line he was informed that the place was occupied

by McCook's Division. When he reached headquarters he made himself and his mission known, and in a few minutes a cypher telegram was on its way to General Thomas at McMinnville :

Bragg at Dunlap yesterday with no force except a few cavalry. Cheatham and Withers marching north. The main army gone by rail from Chattanooga on the 28th to Knoxville.

PRIVATE MARK MALONE.

Ten minutes later the spy was sound asleep on a camp cot in a tent belonging to one of the staff.

Mark had had no sleep for twenty-eight hours, and for much of that time he believed that he would be retaken and hanged. Now he slept a deep sleep. Hour after hour went by, and though bugles called and drums rattled, he slumbered on. He dreamed that he was at Chattanooga. He was standing on the scaffold. Soldiers surrounded him. The noose was adjusted about his neck. He heard the sound of the ax as it cut the rope. He awoke with a cry.

Laura Fain—no, Laura Maynard—his wife—was standing beside him.

She sank down by the cot, and in a moment they were in each other's arms. Neither spoke. Neither wished to do aught but leave tears—

tears of an exquisite happiness—to flow on silently.

Mark and Laura were too happy to ask each other questions as to what had passed since their parting the evening before. They knew they were happy and that was all they cared to know. Laura knew that the frightful doom which hung over Mark so long—for it seemed an age to her—had been averted. Again and again she passed from the remembrance of her terrible anxiety to the thought that he was under his own flag, and she was his wife. She reveled in these transitions. She would go over every anxious moment; she purposely dwelt on that brief but terrible ceremony which had united her, only half a day before, with one whom both considered doomed, that she might experience the exquisite sensation of turning from it to her present delight.

For a time she saw in Mark's face only a reflection of her own happiness. He was feasting his eyes upon her, passing his fingers through her dark hair, or smoothing it back with his hand, while he covered her face with kisses.

Suddenly a thought seemed to come between her and him.

“What is it, darling?” she asked anxiously.

“I was thinking——” said Mark. “But no; I will not think of that.”

"Tell me."

"I was wondering—Laura, did you love *him*?"

Laura cast down her eyes.

"Love? Was it love?" She asked the question of herself. "It was a summer breeze ; while this——"

"This?"

"Is a tempest."

Drawing her lips down to his, before imprinting a kiss, Mark added to her simile :

"A 'wild west wind.'"

"You are thinking of your Shelley," she said. "I shall love him, too, now, since it was he who betrayed you to me."

"And I shall love him the more because he betrayed me—and made me——"

He did not finish. He was thinking of the morning in the garret when in her imperious way she had claimed that saving his life had made her its owner. She remembered it, too, and smiling, finished for him :

"And made you my slave. But who made me 'your lyre even as the forest is' to the west wind?"

Her caresses prevented a reply for a time. When there was a pause, Mark exclaimed wonderingly :

"O woman, why must you so often deny to

the worthy that which you may give in such abundance to one whose only recommendation is an ability to catch your fancy?"

Again there came into his face the expression of a thought which seemed for the moment to carry him away from her.

"What is it now?" she queried anxiously.

Mark smiled. "You will laugh at me when I tell you."

"Then you must be laughed at."

"I was wondering if, when I get back to headquarters, the general will want me to go right away on another mission."

Her arms were about him. She drew a little away and fixed her black eyes upon him. They shone like those of some savage but beautiful animal about to be bereft of her young.

"If you go again," she said fiercely, "into the presence of such a death, I will go with you."

Mark made no reply except to throw his arms about her neck and draw her to him again. Her fierceness was with him her chief charm. Then he made an effort to rise.

"Stay where you are," she said, in the same imperious tone she had given the order once before, when he threatened to leave the garret; "you shall lie there till you promise that you will be a spy no more."

"Let me up," cried Mark, smiling at her earnestness.

"Lie still!"

"Come, sweetheart," he said pleadingly, "let me get up, and I'll say, with Hotspur to his Kate, 'when I'm on horseback, I'll swear I love thee infinitely.'"

Mark was on his back, his arms pinioned; he was powerless. He was surprised at Laura's strength.

"Promise."

"Never!"

"Promise."

"Why so? I know I shall be dying to go again in a week."

"Then you shall lie there till the war is over."

"But I thought you told me once that if you were a man you would be all I have been."

"So I would. And you, being a man, might continue to be so were you the husband of any other woman; but mine, never!"

Mark looked into her eyes and knew that his career in the secret service had ended. The savage opposition he saw there to his ever again risking such a death as he had but a few days before barely escaped, was too strong for him. Where was his adroitness, his ingenuity, his readiness in peculiar situations? Vanished

under the gaze of his young wife. At last he was subdued by a girl.

The arrival of Laura the night before at the farm-house where her mother had stopped and awaited her coming anxiously, their resumption of their journey the next day, during which Laura confessed all to her mother, their safe arrival within the Union lines, the finding Mark at headquarters, may be passed over in these few short phrases.

Mark's meeting with his mother-in-law was, to say the least, embarrassing. Mrs. Fain received him with the same dignity that had characterized her throughout, but without her former cordiality. As yet she knew nothing about his connections, and she disdained to ask. But Mark had satisfied Laura, and the information she transmitted to her mother was in a measure mollifying.

That afternoon the party that had ridden into Anderson the day before, rode out of Altamont in the direction of McMinnville. To all outward appearance the situation was the same; but really, how different! Yesterday Mark was in imminent danger, while Laura was in a state of terror. Then they rode with scarcely a word. Now language was inadequate to convey all they wished to express.

In the evening the party drew up before General Thomas's tent at McMinnville.

Mark went inside.

"General," he said, "you received my telegram?"

"I did."

"Had you not received the information before?"

"If we had, why should we be here?"

There was a brief pause.

"I have brought something besides information, general. May I introduce a party waiting outside?"

"Certainly."

Mark went out and brought in Laura and her mother.

"General, permit me to introduce my wife."

The general looked at the blushing Laura, then at her mother, then at Mark, in undisguised astonishment.

"I thought you had been on a scout," he said.

"I have."

"And courted and wed at the same time?"

"Yes, general."

"Be seated, ladies. Now explain all this."

Mark gave an outline of his adventures, his listener's eyes opening wider as he proceeded.

When the recital was finished the general called out.

“Orderly!”

In a twinkling a man was standing in the tent waiting an order.

“Send for Chaplain Gadsden.”

“Yes, sir.”

“I’m a trifle uncertain about that wedding,” remarked the general. “I think we’d better have it done according to the regulations.”

All smiled save Mrs. Fain, who, since she had been informed of all that had occurred from the time of Mr. Slack’s arrival at her house to Laura’s joining her the night before, maintained a rigid and dignified silence.

While they were waiting for the chaplain, the general wrote a telegram to Mr. Fain at Nashville, announcing the arrival of his wife and daughter. He did not mention the son-in-law.

The chaplain came, and the bride and groom were wed again; this time with ample witnesses, for the whole staff had been ordered to “report in person at headquarters to witness marriage ceremony.” The general gave the bride away, and after the benediction, offering his arm to Mrs. Fain, led the way to another tent where a collation of foraged viands—
foraged unbeknown to the general, and

consisting principally of cold chicken—was served. Unfortunately there was not a glass of wine in camp for the ladies, the only spirits being “commissary” whisky and the “Robinson County” of the country.

While the party were refreshing themselves, word was received from Nashville that Mr. Fain was out of danger and impatiently awaiting his wife and daughter.

After communicating this pleasant bit of information, the general, turning to Mark, said :

“ I shall need you hereafter on my staff. I have learned from your colonel that there is a vacant lieutenancy for you in your regiment, and I will issue an order detailing you for duty with me. But this rank need be only temporary. The army is about to be divided into army corps, and my troops will constitute one of them. Under the recent law fixing the staff of corps commanders, I shall nominate you for inspector-general, with rank of lieutenant-colonel, to be appointed by the President.”

For the first time since she had been apprised of the fact that her daughter was a wife, Mrs. Fain looked happy.

“ General,” said Mark, “ while I appreciate the honor you so kindly bestow upon me I would prefer, were it not for my wife, to remain in the secret service. She certainly deserves the

distinction you offer, and I accept it for her. I rejoice at the prospect of being near you and shall not be averse now, since I have so much to live for, to a service not connected with a constant reminder of hemp rope."

At this juncture an aide-de-camp entered and handed the general a telegram. He cast his eye over it, and said:

"The ball is opened. Nelson is fighting the advance of Bragg's army at Richmond, Kentucky."

THE END.



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